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EVENTS OF THE WEEK

THE French Ministry of Foreign Affairs is reported to have made a very important statement with regard to the nature of the Mediterranean Pact suggested in the recent French Memorandum. It seems that the Ministry has definitely repudiated the idea of a pact on the Locarno model, involving specific military commitments, and desires merely a general pact of non-aggression, arbitration, and conciliation, with some provision for mutual consultation on the lines of the Pacific agreement. The United States would not, apparently, be asked to become a party to the pact. This is a much more acceptable proposition than one for a Mediterranean Locarno, and in view of the key position France will hold at the Conference, it is well worth careful consideration. Another report states that Mr. Matsudaira, the Japanese Ambassador in London, has been informed that France would like to reach naval limitation in two stages; a short-term agreement concluded in London, and a permanent agreement to be subsequently compounded at Geneva. The United States Government is not likely to set its hand to a general agreement of a merely provisional character; but if a Three-Power or Four-Power Agreement can be reached, an interim agreement with France would probably permit of its being given binding force, with a proviso for subsequent readjustment, if necessary.

* * *

Mr. Wakatsuki, the principal Japanese delegate, has made a statement to the Press, which added little to what was already known of the Japanese attitude. It contained, nevertheless, two points of interest. In

the first place, Mr. Wakatsuki definitely announced that Japan was in favour of a reduction in capital ships, and of postponing the replacement dates contained in the Washington Treaty. In the second place, while he repeated Japan's objection to the abolition of submarines, he stated his opinion that types of submarines should be limited. As Japan's plea for retention of the submarine is based solely on its defensive value, this presumably means such limitation of size (and therefore of cruising radius) as would restrict the use of submarines for offensive purposes.

* * *

The postponement of capital ship replacement was the point chiefly stressed by Mr. Stimson, the leading American delegate, in a farewell message. This, indeed, is a matter of such urgency, for financial reasons, to the Powers chiefly concerned that, whatever else happens, some agreement on this point is almost certain. The other issues before the Conference are much more controversial, and President Hoover, in a statement to the American Press, rightly warned the people of the United States against expecting quick results. He himself thought it would be a great achievement if the work of the Conference could be completed in three or four months, and he appealed, in the meantime, for "patience, encouragement, and freedom from criticism." The First Lord of the Admiralty, speaking at Abertillery, made a similar appeal to the British public. He anticipated criticism from two extreme groups—those who desired very large immediate reductions, and those who held that any reduction below the present level would menace our national security. His own view was that the first essential was to put an end to naval competition; once that was achieved, substantial

all-round reduction would become possible. It is not quite clear from the report whether he meant that it could be achieved at the same Conference.

* * *

The Lahore Congress has broken up, not, so far as its leaders are concerned, in the best of tempers. The unanimity of the Congress meetings was not reflected in the Subjects Committee, and Mr. Gandhi's refusal to allow voting on individual names, in an election of new Committee men, led to the walking out of thirty members, who decided to form a Congress Democratic Party, having the same relation to Congress as the I.L.P. to the Labour Party. Mr. Gandhi has since declared that the Congress "may be able to start civil disobedience in several areas in a few months," a lame and impotent conclusion to the flaming resolutions passed at Lahore. Meanwhile, the National Liberal Federation, the Justice Party (composed of non-Brahmins of Madras), and the more responsible Moslem leaders, are making a great effort to rally moderate opinion all over India round the standard of Co-operation. Their task is admittedly a difficult one, and their most influential spokesmen have pronounced strongly on the importance of the earliest possible lead from the British side, by publication of the Simon Report, and the calling of the Round-table Conference. The situation presents great opportunities as well as great dangers; if the dangers are to be averted, the opportunities must be seized.

* * *

The Congress Party in India are exploiting to the full an abridged and misleading summary of a speech delivered in Cambridge on Saturday by Lord Russell, the Under-Secretary for India. Fortunately, the Cambridge correspondent of the *EVENING STANDARD* took a shorthand note of the speech, which has now been published in full. Lord Russell, who was speaking quite informally, did not use the phrase attributed to him, "Dominion status is not possible for a long time," but he did point out the difficulties of a rapid advance towards self-government. The following passage is typical of the whole speech:—

"In India they would have insuperable difficulties in running things for themselves if we suddenly let go. There are many races, and at least two dominant religions, and these races and religions do not work sympathetically together. And even in the discussions they have been divided, and they have not arrived at any way of living with each other. What they would do if they were suddenly left to themselves, what would happen, heaven only knows, and it is quite clear that Indians do not know."

This is obviously a common-sense statement of familiar facts, and the Congress Party can do no real harm by calling attention to it.

* * *

Down to date, the principal business before The Hague Conference has been the mass of arrangements necessary for founding a Reparations Bank. The issues of principle and detail involved are equally technical, and as a result, the expert committees have been almost exclusively responsible for such business as has been transacted. Two important political questions have, nevertheless, been brought forward: first, whether the creditor-countries shall formally resign their treaty rights to impose sanctions in the event of a deliberate German default; secondly, whether the Austrian Republic's reparation liabilities should be cancelled. It was inevitable that the question of sanctions should be raised, though possibly a pity that it was raised so abruptly; for the German delegates are sufficiently in fear of Nationalist criticism and obstruction to feel compelled to raise the point, and M. Tardieu cannot,

at the moment, afford to make handsome concessions, for fear of losing control of the conservative section of his supporters. The latest reports, however, indicate that the French are hopeful of finding an acceptable formula.

* * *

The treatment which shall be meted out to Austria on the reparations issue is a matter which affects, indirectly, the political stability of Central Europe. Herr Schober will certainly have little difficulty in proving that Austria will not be able to pay a penny for many years to come. We, in this country, who have watched Austria emerge from one difficulty after another by constitutional methods, and who, in consequence, regard her as a stabilizing influence in Central Europe and beyond, have a natural inclination to relieve her of any irksome responsibilities. It seems more important that Austria should act as a counterpoise to the violent and emotional politics of the States around her, than that a few millions should be extorted from Austrian taxpayers twenty or thirty years hence. But it must be remembered that heavy reparations (politely called Liberation payments) have been imposed upon the Secession States, and that a plea for rational generosity towards Austria may excite bitter opposition in Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia.

* * *

Mr. Ramsay MacDonald's New Year message to the Glasgow *FORWARD* has naturally attracted a good deal of attention. It is written in the mood of outraged virtue which contributed so much to the fall of the Labour Government in 1924, and it raises the anxious question as to whether Mr. MacDonald's touchiness and intolerance of criticism will again make co-operation between the Liberal and Labour Parties virtually impossible. The message begins cheerfully:—

"The Labour Party has had a wonderful year. The Election made narrower than ever the gap between a Parliamentary minority and majority, and to the House of Commons was sent a body of Labour veterans and Labour youth—of faithful men who have done work and ardent men whose lives are still before them—which the other parties may envy. They fill the Benches, keenly following the work of the House, silent when silence is golden, ready to speak when arguments are required, steady and loyal in the face of the enemy, whether he is in front, or on the flank, or in the midst of the camp."

But a preevish note soon creeps in. The party, says Mr. MacDonald,

"is confused neither by Liberals who 'go one better' for political purposes, nor by those who, though elected under its auspices, prefer propaganda to building and criticism to responsibility, and who see no difference between a friendly Government battling with circumstance and a hostile one battling with right."

The last antithesis seems rather pharisaical, but there is worse to follow.

* * *

It is when he comes to the Liberal Party that Mr. MacDonald shows a disquieting irritability:—

"I wonder," he says, "if ever again anyone can be found to undertake the harassing task of forming a Government without the peace of mind and security for the development of a policy from stage to stage which a majority gives."

(One wonders, in passing, what Mr. Snowden would think of the "peace of mind and security" provided by a Labour majority.)

"Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. Winston Churchill seem to have decided that at all and any cost they are to defeat us. They thought they had done it last Thursday, when on the cry of 'dear coal' they proposed to doom the miner to long hours and defeat the only chance which is to come in our lifetime to organize this deplorable trade and give it internal peace. Mr. Lloyd George's

speech, with its outrageous personal attack upon a Minister who has spent his life in giving service to our workers, was plainly designed to prevent any co-operation in the Lobby between Liberals and the Government, and to defeat the good relations which had been built up between them."

Now, what, after all, was this "outrageous personal attack"? We will quote it in full, for a myth is growing up that Mr. Lloyd George really was very unkind to Mr. Ben Turner. These are his actual words:—

"The name of the hon. Member the Secretary for Mines is on the Bill. I have great respect for the hon. Member, and there are many positions that he has filled with great distinction and many positions in which he would prove successful, but, honestly, regarding him as Minister of Mines I cannot help thinking that the quota of responsibility is greater than the standard capacity. (Interruption.) I say that without hesitation, and I am entitled to say it. (Interruption.) In my judgment it is vital, in so important a Ministry, that men should be there who are acquainted with the working of the industry."

This is entirely legitimate criticism, and it is a serious weakness in the Government if their policy is deflected by resentment at any suggestion that they are not perfect.

* * *

The Minister of Labour has appointed Mr. H. P. Macmillan, K.C., to be a Court of Inquiry into the Wool Trade Dispute. Miss Bondfield has departed from the usual custom in constituting a Court consisting of one person, but, as the employers have long ago rejected arbitration in the course of the negotiations, it was probably impracticable to have the two sides represented in the Court. Mr. Macmillan's terms of reference are "to inquire into the matters in dispute between the parties to the Northern Counties District Wool and Allied Textile Industrial Council relating to the wages of the operatives and to report thereon to the Minister." It will be remembered that the employers originally demanded a reduction of wages of 16 per cent., and that they eventually agreed to reduce this cut to 8.8 per cent. The Unions then took a ballot of their members, and an overwhelming majority voted in favour of resistance. It is to be feared that Mr. Macmillan will have great difficulty in discovering a way out of the deadlock.

* * *

Mr. Arthur Greenwood, Minister of Health, speaking at the annual conference of the University Labour Federation at Oxford on Sunday, claimed that the raising of the school-leaving age would have an important effect in reducing the number of unemployed, and that the ultimate result of the change would be the absorption into productive industry of something like half a million adult workers. This seems to us to be an optimistic estimate. It must not be forgotten that there are cases in which the employment of boys is complementary, and not substitutionary to that of men. On the question of maintenance grants, Mr. Greenwood indicated that there are still unsolved problems. It was clear, he said, that there must be a money grant. One of the practical difficulties was that the sum mentioned was not as high as the wages these young people could earn in industry, and therefore they were going to call on working-class families to make a further sacrifice. He was not prepared to discuss family allowances, but it was obvious that the State could spend money more effectively on social services than by direct grants.

"One of the problems," continued Mr. Greenwood, "is the place which maintenance grants might occupy in a developed scheme of social insurance. The time

has now arrived after nearly twenty years' experience for a general overhaul of insurance schemes. We are trying now to get a general picture of the experience since 1911 of our systems of social insurance, and it may well be that within the framework of a developed scheme of that kind something by way of maintenance or allowance might become payable that would solve the question of means—assuming that the system of social insurance continues on a contributory basis."

We welcome this forecast of a general overhaul of social insurance, but it is to be hoped that increased burdens on industry will not be in the picture for the next few years.

* * *

At the same conference, Mr. G. D. H. Cole spoke with considerable vigour against the idea of a national industrial council, as put forward by the Mond-Turner group. Such a council, he said, would almost inevitably become a serious instrument for dealing with economic conditions. It would be a body which would have a strong claim to be consulted by the Government before the introduction of legislation of important consequence to industry. The existence of such a body would be a danger to a strong Labour Government which was prepared to carry through drastic economic and industrial reforms. He hoped that these discussions with the employers' bodies would break down. The T.U.C. could have gained time by going on talking, but they should not have come to any decision for the creation of permanent machinery for future organization. They had, to a large extent, favoured the idea of a national industrial council, and that was a dangerous attitude. Opinions of this kind would not have been at all surprising from the G. D. H. Cole of fifteen years ago, but we thought from his last book that he had mellowed.

* * *

An International Conference on Hours, Wages, and Conditions in the Coal Industry opened at Geneva this week. It has been convened by the International Labour Office at the request of the League Assembly. Britain is represented by Mr. W. R. Smith, Parliamentary Secretary, Board of Trade, Mr. H. A. Lee, of the Mining Association, and Mr. A. J. Cook, of the Miners' Federation. The eight other coal-producing countries of Europe are also represented. Particular interest attaches to the opening remarks of Mr. Cook, who declared that there was agreement between the British Government, British employers, and British workers, that the hours question was essentially an international question, and must be dealt with as such if intensive international competition was to be avoided. British miners felt that the first step towards uniformity was to determine the length of the working day. This, he said, must be measured on the "bank-to-bank" principle. The next step was to obtain agreement that regulation of hours applied to all underground workers, and the third to obtain for miners one hour per day less work than that agreed upon at Washington for other workers. An international agreement of this kind will not be easily attainable, but it is much to be desired.

* * *

With our next issue we shall publish a special Naval Conference Supplement containing an account of previous negotiations for naval limitation, a summary of the naval policies of the Conference Powers, and full particulars of their present fleets. The intention of the Supplement is to supply our readers with all the facts and figures necessary to a full understanding of the discussions at the Conference, and we believe that it will prove indispensable for this purpose.

THE LABOUR PARTY AND EXPENDITURE

WE observe with considerable interest the discussion which has now begun within the Labour Party on the possibilities of the increased taxation of the rich. The difficult Budget outlook has served to bring to the surface a profoundly important issue, which, under more favourable circumstances, might have remained latent for several years; the issue between a responsible and an essentially irresponsible attitude towards the national finances. The controversies within the Labour movement, arising out of the I.L.P. propaganda of "Socialism in our time," have, of course, long made it clear to the initiated that this issue was lurking in the background; but its practical implications have been obscured until recently by the fact that all sections of the Labour Party have stood for policies entailing large increases in the volume of social expenditure, and have entertained a vague belief that these policies could somehow be carried into effect, not perhaps without increasing taxation at all, but without increasing it very much. No responsible Socialist was really prepared for a situation such as now confronts us, in which, as Mr. Snowden justly observed in the debate on Christmas Eve, increased taxation would be inevitable even if the present Government had not spent a farthing, and in which the meagre sums they have dribbled out in very partial and unsatisfying fulfilment of their more explicit election promises are sufficient to ensure that the increased taxation will be stiff and formidable. In the adjustment to this unexpected situation the underlying divergencies of Labour thought assume a sharper outline.

To one school of thought, represented most prominently by Mr. Maxton and Mr. Wheatley, and more influentially perhaps by Mr. E. F. Wise, the situation presents no real difficulty. The solution is simple—to impose heavy taxes on the rich. It is absurd, the protagonists of this school contend, to suggest that the money is not there. Of course, it is there; and they supply statistics showing the large aggregate of income that accrues to the fortunate classes. And, of course, it can be got. Why, taxation was very much higher a few years ago. No doubt, the more reasonable of this school admit, there is need for a certain amount of caution; but this must not be carried too far. You must accustom the rich gradually to the higher burdens they will have to bear; and there may be a case, therefore, for Mr. Snowden being rather stubborn this year in his reluctance to sanction increased expenditure. But it would be intolerable if this stubbornness were to continue. Labour really must move forward before long with its real social programme; and it is Mr. Snowden's duty to provide the means, not to bar the way. Unfortunately, however, Mr. Snowden—there is no disguising the fact—does not appear to share this view; and they ruefully collect the evidence which indicates that Mr. Snowden's state of mind, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, is by no means what they would desire.

"The more the political situation develops," wrote the *NEW LEADER* a few weeks ago, "the more apparent it seems to be that the keeper of the purse is the

stumbling-block to the adoption of substantial measures. An article by Mr. J. H. Hudson, M.P., the Parliamentary Secretary to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in a Sunday paper last week-end, makes this still more apparent. . . . Mr. Snowden may not have any direct responsibility for this alarmist article, but it is difficult to believe that it is not a fairly accurate reflection of his point of view."

Mr. Hudson's article, which appeared in *REYNOLDS'S* on December 15th, is, indeed, a noteworthy sign of the times. We can recall no previous occasion on which a member of the Labour Party has set out to elaborate in public the disadvantages and the dangers of pushing the taxation of wealth too far. Mr. Hudson's article follows very much the line of reasoning which we developed in a recent article in *THE NATION* under the heading of "The Limits of Insular Socialism." He shows how easy it would be for various classes of taxpayers to escape the attentions of the Inland Revenue by the expedient of residence abroad. He points out that this applies not only to individuals, but to various classes of companies, which would lose little, and might, if taxation were largely increased, gain much by transferring their offices abroad:—

"Any rapid increase of taxation," he sums up, "will in this class lead to extensive evasion. The industrial owners at home will have to make up for the dodges of the foreign investor. The consequences would be inevitable. The tendency to realize on industrial capital would be increased. Its extension would be restricted. The desire to invest abroad would be increased. The 'flight from the pound' would mean a higher Bank rate at a time when industry is looking for it to go lower and yet lower."

Mr. Hudson, it is true, is careful to limit his moral to the unwise of "any rapid increase of taxation," but the logic of his argument shows that "rapidity" is not the essential point. It is not only the familiar "inevitability of gradualness" with which Labour Governments must reckon, in this matter of the taxation of wealth; but the danger, in a world of international tendency, of moving over-far in advance of other countries. We have already pushed the taxation of wealth so much further than any other country outside Bolshevik Russia that it is necessary to regard this danger very seriously indeed.

There is, indeed, no real precedent for the situation which now confronts us. Taxation on anything approaching its present scale was quite unknown before the war; and in the earlier post-war years, though taxation was substantially heavier than it is to-day, Great Britain still seemed to stand as a sort of rock of financial security amid the welter of currency debauchery in which the principal European countries were involved. When Mr. Snowden was last in office, it was the French Minister of Finance who had the difficulty in balancing his Budget; it was the French *rentiers* who were coming to think it prudent to invest their money in Great Britain. To-day, currencies have been stabilized throughout the Continent, and remissions of taxation have become the order of the day. It is against this altered Continental background that the British Budget of 1930 will have to make its appearance. A stiff increase of direct taxation, in time of peace, with no very special emergency to excuse it,

starting from the level of an income tax of 4s. in the £, and a super-tax which ranges up to 6s.! So much is already inevitable; up to a point, Mr. Snowden is entitled to argue that Mr. Churchill had made it inevitable; and so much, we may hope, will be supportable, though it will not make a very good impression on a capitalist world, and a bad impression will be the reverse of helpful to our trade. But to press forward, in these circumstances, and in face of this contrast, with further measures of unproductive expenditure, which will make inevitable still further increases of taxation, to argue as though this policy were capable of progressive and almost indefinite extension, and to call for a quickening of the pace—we find it quite impossible to reconcile such views with any adequate appreciation of the international character of the modern world.

Another point relevant to the problem must be borne in mind. The falling-off in the yield of taxes, which is perhaps the most ominous feature of the last quarter's accounts, and which constitutes an important part of the Budget difficulty, raises a disquieting question as to our national economic strength. In recent years, the continued buoyancy of the revenue, despite the long-sustained depression of our old basic industries, and despite the waste of large-scale unemployment, has been our great consolation and reassurance. It has encouraged the belief that Great Britain was still making progress, that our national income was still continuing to grow, yielding us year by year an increment, available, if we chose to use it so, for social improvement. The present set-back to the revenue casts retrospective doubts on such optimistic interpretations. If the recent Stock Exchange slump has sufficed to knock the bottom out of the revenue calculations, may it not be that the buoyancy of the revenue in previous years was wholly attributable to the preceding Stock Exchange boom? That steady growth in the aggregate prosperity, that annually accruing increment of wealth, that wonderful resilience of the British economic system—have not these perhaps been merely so many phantoms, illusions made plausible by the upward trend of stocks and shares? We shall be in a better position to return a definite answer to this question when we learn Mr. Snowden's estimate for the revenue for next year on the basis of present taxes.

Meanwhile, it is already clear, we think, that the situation does not permit us—and will not permit us for a long time to come—to proceed further along the path of social expenditure of the Widows' Pensions—Unemployment Insurance Bill type, expenditure, that is to say, which is concerned with the redistribution of wealth, and which is essentially unproductive in its character. We say unproductive expenditure, for there could be no greater mistake than to suppose that the situation calls for another undiscriminating economy campaign. On the contrary, one of the clearest morals of our present difficulties is the ruinous wastefulness of our large-scale unemployment. It remains a hard and fundamental fact that the maintenance of every unemployed man imposes a direct charge on public funds, equivalent to about one-third of the wages he would earn in work, and a much larger indirect charge when the consequences of diminished national produc-

tivity are reckoned in. It remains true, we are convinced, that a vigorous policy of national development is one of our great needs, that there is large scope for such a policy, if it is tackled in the right way, and that it would be calculated to relieve the burdens of the Budget, not to add to them.

But the time has gone by when we can safely indulge in expenditure of the "dole" type. Ministers, it is clear, and their immediate associates are coming to appreciate this, as, indeed, anyone must who is in contact with financial realities. But a Labour majority will not be safe, until the rank and file appreciate it too.

LAPUTANS OR HOUYHNHNMS?

AT 5.30 on an October morning, on board the P. and O. boat that was bringing me from Bombay to Japan, I woke up with a start as the engines stopped; and at the same moment the steward knocked at my cabin door. The Japanese medical inspection was to be held at 6.0 a.m., as had been announced the evening before. Would I please be sure to present myself in the saloon at 6.0 o'clock precisely? The captain was anxious that the ship should not be delayed. There was a slight note of anxiety in the steward's voice; and I realized that this inspection—unlike the inspection at Bombay—had to be taken seriously.

When I came on deck I found the lascar crew drawn up in line, my fellow-passengers assembling, the ship's officers *affairés*, and the Japanese sanitary authorities just coming on board. Slowly and deliberately, with serious countenances, they looked us up and down, as though they were diagnosing noisome diseases in some strange, unfamiliar animal; and one could not tell from their expression whether they were going to give us a clean bill or order us to 'bout ship and leave their shores. As I waited to hear our fate, it was borne in upon me that Japan had been closed to foreigners as lately as three-quarters of a century ago. Were we still being admitted only on sufferance? As I gazed out of the saloon window at the islands and peninsulas in the midst of which our ship was anchored, the morning light, playing on the sea-mist, made the fringes of the land seem to shake themselves free from the water's edge and hover in the air; and I remembered Gulliver's first sight of Laputa. Did these Japanese arbiters of our fate regard me as the Laputans regarded Gulliver? But perhaps that was too flattering a view to take of our situation; for it suddenly came into my mind that at the further extremity of Japan, on the Northern Island of Hokkaido, there live certain poor relations of "Nordic Man"—a remnant of the aboriginal savages who had led a nasty brutish existence in Japan before the country had been redeemed by the coming of the Yamato race. Yes, that was more likely: our aspect must have reminded the sanitary officials of the "Hairy Ainu"; and the inscrutable expression on their faces was a mask to cover the physical disgust which we aroused in them. And then I remembered Gulliver's fourth voyage, and how he had been taken for a Yahoo by the Houyhnhnms.

During my visit to Japan, I had the experience of being taken for a Yahoo once or twice again: for instance, when I showed myself too clumsy to eat with chopsticks and had to be provided with knife and fork—the sort of fool-proof implements that one would put into the hands of a performing monkey. It happened to me again when I put up at a Japanese inn. I had learnt already that in a

country where people are really fastidious about cleanliness, one ought to take off one's dirty boots before going indoors, so I duly repeated my lesson and congratulated myself on my progress in civilization as I shuffled in slippers along the corridor towards my room. But I had congratulated myself too early; for it did not occur to me that really clean people would leave the slippers too behind before they trod on that immaculate straw-matting. The chamber-maid who escorted me was too polite to remonstrate; but when I saw the look of horror on her face as she whipped the slippers out of the room at the first opportunity, I realized that the Ainu in me must look very shaggy still to Japanese eyes.

On the whole, however, the Japanese reminded me less often of the Houyhnhnms than of the Laputans. For example, at Shimonoseki, when—thanks to the favourable verdict of the sanitary authorities—I there set foot for the first time on Japanese soil, a thoroughly Laputan incident occurred. I landed with an Australian colleague; and our first act was to find our way to the local telegraph-office in order to notify our families of our safe arrival at our journey's end. I wrote out a telegram to London, my companion, one to Melbourne; the Japanese official took them and scrutinized them with the same serious mien as the sanitary authorities had worn when they were scrutinizing our persons. At last he broke silence: "Melbourne is wrongly spelt." "I hardly think so," said my companion, somewhat taken aback; "I come from there, you know." Silently the official rummaged under the counter and brought out—a "Times Atlas of the world"! Slowly and methodically he turned the pages, and we watched, entranced, while Europe slipped by and his eye hovered a moment over Tropical Africa. (Well, why not Tropical Africa? People so outlandishly remote as these Ainu-like foreigners from the standard human type might come from anywhere!) At last, realizing that Australasia lay at the end of the atlas and that time was pressing, we roused ourselves to assist the investigator; the proper page ("Australia—Eastern half") was found, and his finger was guided to the spot where Melbourne was inscribed. "You see, you did spell it wrong," said the official, with an air of delicately restrained triumph—but, of course, my friend had really spelt it correctly!

Yet what provincial post-office in England would possess a foreign atlas of the world, or use it even if a paternal Government supplied it? Or, for that matter, what observation-car on an English railway would have Godwin's "Principles of Political Justice" (two volumes, octavo) in its library, as the observation-car had on the Tokio-Shimonoseki express? But I am forgetting the backwardness of my barbarian home. In England there are no observation-cars, and if ever there are any, I am sure that a library will not be included in their equipment. This is undoubtedly the Laputan touch, and I found marks of it everywhere. For example, when I was doing a walking-tour in the mountains south of Nara and had to ask my way, the Japanese to whom I addressed myself would often draw me a little map on the back of his visiting card; and other Japanese, to whom I displayed this map, would show me exactly the point that I had reached and which was my next turning. Now, when I travel in England, I like to carry a map (being rather Laputan-minded myself—for a barbarian), and I try to ask my way by reference to the map, and my wife always laughs at me and tells me that English people (to their credit, she maintains) do not look at things map-wise, and my wife is always right—the map simply bewilders them. But, to the Japanese, map-reading seems to come naturally. Sometimes this quality

reveals its defect—for instance, if the distance is short and one is in a hurry. On one busy morning in Tokio, I found myself with a few minutes to spare in the neighbourhood of the British Consulate, where I had to have something done to my passport. Time was too precious to miss the opportunity, so I asked my way of the concierge in the nearest "big building." A British hall-porter or policeman, reading off the map in his head, would have said, "First to the right and fourth to the left," and I should have gone on my way rejoicing. The Japanese concierge insisted on drawing the map for me. In consequence, I was in no danger of losing my way, but I was a quarter of an hour late for my next appointment.

This slow, academic deliberateness seems to be characteristic of the Japanese in any situation where they are handling the Western technique of material civilization. (Another example: If you go to a Japanese bank to draw, on your letter of credit, say, five-pounds' worth of Japanese currency, the business is apt to take you anything from forty minutes to an hour.) As one watches them at work in this foreign medium, one receives the impression of highly civilized people of great ability and with a very exacting standard of workmanship, engaged upon some almost superhumanly difficult piece of mental exploration. The Japanese bank-manager, wrestling with one's letter of credit, reminds one of a European Assyriologist deciphering some half-effaced cuneiform inscription. The telegraph-clerk might be a physicist investigating the structure of the atom. Of course, these operations cannot really be so difficult to the Japanese as they appear; for, after all, they are now just as much matters of everyday business life in Japan as they are in any Western country, and if the Japanese really found them as difficult as all that, Japanese business could not be carried on—*quod est absurdum*, as we know from our own experience of Japanese commercial competition in the markets of the world. I fancy this slow, deliberate, academic approach to ordinary business affairs is a heritage from two or three generations back, when the fathers and grandfathers of the present generation in Japan did have to overcome superhuman difficulties in their heroic enterprise of mastering the methods of Western civilization. At bottom, the Japanese must be a nimble-minded people. Otherwise, they could not have become such fine artists and such fine soldiers and, above all, such fine swordsmen. Yet this native trait—suppressed in an historic crisis of adaptation to an alien way of life—seems to have been overlaid by a habit of subordinating speed to accuracy in dealing with an exotic technique. And this new habit, thus established, will presumably become further ingrained as a greater and greater part of Japanese life comes to be lived in the Western way.

On occasions, this scrupulous exactitude is absurd, on occasions it is irritating; but on the whole it is admirable. And whenever in future I hear "Nordic Men" talking nonsense about innate racial characteristics, I shall smile to myself as I remember how I saw the supposed virtues of the "White Man" exemplified in Japan more thoroughly than I have ever seen them in Europe or America. It is, perhaps, not unfair to judge by the kinds of people whom the passing traveller encounters in all countries alike: the hotel servants and the taxi-drivers and the railway officials. I can only say that, in this class of people, there is a greater sense of responsibility and a greater courtesy and dignity in Japan than in any other country in which I have travelled. If the Japanese "black-coat" is sometimes a Laputan, his humbler fellow-countryman is often a Houyhnhnm. I devoutly hope that we, in our dealings with them, are not always Yahoos.

ARNOLD J. TOYNBEE.

THE INEVITABILITY OF GRADUALNESS

Extra-territoriality

By an edict of Nanking
Ceased to be a living thing,
Ceased to be an actuality,
As from January first;
And the foreigners were quaking
At this dread New Year's awaking—
Fearing greatly for their throats—
When their fears were all dispersed
By an interchange of Notes.
All the edict meant, it seemed,
Was, "Prolonged negotiation
For the gradual liquidation
Of the white man's status here,
Shall, in principle, be deemed,
To begin with the New Year."

Since this dignified formality
Soothed the Kuomintang's pride,
Could not wild men from the Clyde
Thus be won to graduality
As the goal before them set;
And our pale financiers, quaking
At the thought of banks a-breaking—
Fearing greatly for their cash—
Be assured the Cabinet
Will do nothing that is rash?
Let this formula sublime
(With diverse interpretation)
Heal each schism in the nation—
"As from January one,
Socialism in our time
Shall be deemed to have begun."

MACFLECKNOE.

LIFE AND POLITICS

STIMULATED no doubt by Mr. MacDonald's unfair and rather ill-natured New Year message in *FORWARD*, Labour writers and speakers continue to treat the Liberals with a sort of threatening patronage. The rumour has been widespread in Labour circles that, as the result, apparently, of a sinister compact with the Conservatives, the Liberals intend, when the House meets, to bring the Government down on the Coal Bill. This is, of course, ridiculous nonsense. It is inconceivable that anyone should believe this yarn in view of the published fact that the Liberal leaders have been spending their holidays on the hard and thankless task of devising amendments to turn the Bill from a bad one into a good one—or as near a good one as is possible. The Liberal aim is co-operation, not destruction. The alteration of the Bill so as to make it in fact a stepping-stone to an effective measure of reform in the industry is in accordance with the Government's own expressed intentions, and not even Mr. MacDonald could maintain that the Liberal experts are not well equipped for the work. It is true that when the experts first got down to it, they almost despaired of the possibility of amendment, and even now the Liberals would certainly prefer the withdrawal of the Bill and the production of a new one when Parliament meets, but doubtless that is too much to ask of Ministers who display the exaggerated pride that goes with an inferiority complex. The chief trouble has been in amending the Bill so as to secure amalgamation, and the elimination of uneconomic pits; for without these things Liberals see little hope for the industry. The amendment of the quota proposals so as to reduce the evil of the creation of fictitious values is found to be comparatively easy. Of course, it is quite possible that Mr. Graham will produce amendments himself which will make much of this

Liberal work superfluous, and if he does so the Liberals certainly will not complain. Better late than never.

* * *

I found some entertainment in a dull season from studying the pronouncements of our great newspaper lords, the would-be political dictators of the day. The occasion was a dinner given by Lord Rothermere to "his editors" (how grand that sounds), with Lord Beaverbrook as the honoured, but not silent, guest. Perhaps to the relief of the editors, the speeches ignored the topic of journalism, apart from a reference by Lord Rothermere to "wonderful papers," and the engaging statement that it takes more real ability to run newspapers successfully than to do anything else. Both Lord Rothermere and Lord Beaverbrook are prepared with solutions (or stunts) for the remedying of our political ills. Lord Beaverbrook's we know only too well, from the profuse and reiterated columns devoted to it in his "wonderful" papers. He is, in his way, a constructive reformer, however crazy, as we may think, his structure appears. Lord Rothermere's strong line is abuse of Mr. Baldwin and the Conservative Party, but he has his positive contribution also: the installation of Lord Beaverbrook at 10, Downing Street. The report leaves us to imagine the blushes with which Lord Beaverbrook heard of his promotion from his noble friend. He seems to have been so much encouraged as to appeal forthwith to Lord Rothermere to throw all the influence of his "wonderful" papers on the side of the Crusade. The latter, very discreetly, failed to respond. He probably feels quite competent to select his own stunts without assistance from Lord Beaverbrook. It is all very well to back him for Prime Minister. That harms nobody, but a stunt is serious business, and Lord Rothermere, to give him his due, is an able business man. A second-hand stunt would be a confession of inferiority.

* * *

The failure of the London authorities to provide houses for the poor at rents which the poor can pay was illustrated in a dramatic way by a case in the Marylebone Police Court this week. The case concerned a goods porter who was turned out by a Marylebone slum clearance scheme, and forced to live in the new L.C.C. estate at Acton. The man's wages were two pounds six shillings a week, and out of this the rent for the three-roomed house was fourteen shillings and a penny. This is a preposterously high proportion of income to go in rent. The magistrate remarked that "these L.C.C. de luxe houses are too dear for people with small wages." That, notoriously, is the truth; everyone knows that there are multitudes of poor people in London who are paying far more rent than they can afford, simply because no decent accommodation is provided within their means. The L.C.C. has recently made some small attempts to build three-roomed tenement flats at rents of from eight and sixpence to twelve and sixpence—sometimes slightly less—but the supply does not begin to cope with the need, and such rents are really far too high. In other words, the failure to house the poor, people earning round about the wage of this goods porter, at rents which do not force them into privation and misery, is complete in London, and with few exceptions, throughout the country generally. It is useless for such bodies as the L.C.C. to claim credit for their magnificent housing schemes when those schemes leave the slum problem more or less where it was before all this enterprise began. This is, to my mind, the great social tragedy of our times.

* * *

For once we may all sympathize with the Duke of Northumberland, who is threatened by the Middlesex County Council with the compulsory acquisition of Syon

Park, that it may be converted into a sewage works. This disgusting proposal has already roused furious resentment, and one may surely feel fairly confident that Parliament will force the County Council to drop it. Of course, the Duke could spike their guns by giving his Park to the public right away, but he is probably unable to afford this; the business of being a Duke is, in these days, a comparatively depressed industry. The view across the river from Kew Gardens to the unspoiled river meadows of Syon Park and the old house Robert Adam designed, with its lion on the roof, is justly one of the most famous in the country. It is as beautiful in its way and as well worth preserving as the view from Richmond Terrace. To turn this exquisite bit of landscape into a stinking sewage works, with a concrete wall along the river and everything squalid and efficient about it, is truly a loathsome prospect: I do not think the Director of Kew exaggerates in calling it "a national crime." The obvious thing for the Government to do with Syon Park is to take it over as an extension of Kew Gardens. The Park is full of beautiful trees of kinds that do not grow at Kew owing to the difference in the soil, and the place is in every way suited to become a welcome addition to this national pleasure ground. Fortunately the offence is so gross this time that the volume of protest, led, as it will be, by highly influential people, will be too formidable to be ignored or circumvented by concessions that concede everything but the essential thing. The Middlesex County Council must dump their sewage somewhere else.

* * *

I hope that it will be possible to arrange the next great exhibition in London so that the pictures may be seen in a reasonable degree of comfort. My one attempt so far to see the Italian pictures was a painful experience. The arduous and endurances of a football scrimmage do not provide the surroundings necessary for the calm enjoyment of masterpieces. The rooms are hopelessly over-crowded during most hours of the day. I had to abandon in despair all hope of studying the primitives and the early masters in the next room. There were solid blocks of humanity filling up all the corners. All this may show an encouraging amount of enthusiasm for art, perhaps an over-charitable explanation. The fact remains that one ought not to be asked to see pictures in such conditions. The committee doubtless have done their best, but the old rooms at the Royal Academy are not really suitable for such a show. They are awkwardly arranged, and, for the most part, much too small. Vast expanses of wall space, such as the galleries at South Kensington provide, are needed. I think the necessary sacrifice should be made to allow of no picture being hung at a level below the heads of the sightseers: the close view may have been necessary with some of the Flemish and Belgian miniature work, but hardly with the Italian pictures. Altogether the crowding, movement, and general fuss constitute an atmosphere hostile to that leisurely calm and freedom from distractions necessary, if one is to get much pleasure from works of art. After struggling for a while I gave up any serious attempt to see the pictures, and fell to finding amusement in the extraordinary collection of human types swarming in the galleries. This is a rich entertainment, but hardly what one pays to see.

* * *

I wonder how many of my readers know a little book which I fished out of a box in the Charing Cross Road the other day, and found to be uncommonly cheap for a shilling. I refer to "Ginx's Baby, his Birth and Other Misfortunes," fifth edition, 1870. No author's name appears on the title-page. "Ginx's Baby" was the one brilliant achievement of a certain Edward Jenkins, M.P., whose career I found

described in the D.N.B. (second supplement). At the time he wrote this book Jenkins was a Radical; later on, if I remember right, he turned Conservative. "Ginx's Baby," like "Piccadilly" in another class, is an interesting example of revolt from the social complacency of mid-Victorian life. The "idea" is excellent. The author shows up the humbugs and selfish fanatics of his time by doing what Christ did. He puts a child in the midst of them. The pages describing the struggle for the possession of Ginx's Baby between the Roman Catholics and the Protestants are admirable. I cannot remember anything of the kind so wholesomely bitter since Swift. Artistically, the book is faulty; the handling of the fine conception is often marred by the desire to preach; but I think that this half-forgotten little book is in its degree a little masterpiece, well worth putting into circulation again.

KAPPA.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

THE MCKENNA DUTIES

SIR,—Your article on the McKenna Duties will leave most Free Traders more than a little puzzled. We have been in the habit of teaching the truth that trade is exchange and that "dumped articles" were merely articles that had been bought cheap. That is, that a million pounds' worth of imported cars represented a million pounds' worth of coal or cloth or cotton or shipping or banking services—or, of course, a medley of these things sent in exchange, and that the more and better cars there were in the million pounds' worth the better for the country.

Granted that it would be annoying to the motor industrialists to meet world competition as the rest of us must do, none the less the export trade would gain in proportion, while the fact of cheapness in cars would set money free in the home market.

These, sir, are economic arguments, and I know of no grounds for supposing that they are less existent when applied to the McKenna duties than when applied to any other straight Protection. You advance, however, psychological reasons why this moment appears to you to be a good one for Liberals to weaken in their fight for an immediate return to Free Trade, and you envisage, apparently, a condition of affairs in which Mr. Snowden might be abiding by his principles what time Liberals spoke learnedly on expediency.

I would promise you one result of such a position, sir. Liberals would abandon such a miscalled Liberal Party, not in single spies, but in battalions. The present writer would not remain with such a party for five minutes. Some new and real Liberal Party would have to be created.—Yours, &c.,

RONALD F. WALKER,
Hon. Secretary, Yorkshire Liberal Federation,
ex-candidate for Dewsbury.
Fir Cottage, Mirfield, Yorkshire.

A NATIONAL CRISIS?

SIR,—The increasingly serious condition of the nation's finances and industrial life compels many of us to ask whether the time has not come for a combined sustained effort by men of all parties to arrest the tendency towards decline which is becoming apparent.

The approaching Budget will entail further burdens of taxation, and statistics suggest that our social services have now reached a point beyond which we cannot at present go without jeopardizing our productive output and defeating the purpose we have in view.

Our power to lend abroad is already hampered to the detriment of our export trade and the consequent increase of unemployment. International competition in world markets grows more acute, and we are greatly handicapped in the struggle by the high costs of production. America has garnered enormous financial resources, is magnificently equipped industrially, and her taxation is being

lowered. Germany, by the repressive character of reparations, is being forced to work at high pressure to provide the tribute called for in the shape of excess exports, whilst France, by her devaluation of the franc, has sacrificed the rentier to the producer.

Is not the threat to our industrial supremacy becoming so grave that exceptional measures are called for unless we are prepared to accept a permanently lower standard of life for our people?

As a nation and individually we are spending too much, and the question intrudes itself persistently whether we are sufficiently alive to the danger to which all democracies are prone—the danger of political parties basing their appeals to the electorate on material considerations without due regard to the future well-being of the country.

We are still diverting large blocks of capital in the shape of death duties from the proper function of repayment of debt and treating these as revenue, whilst our Sinking Fund is entirely inadequate if we are to improve the credit of the nation. The Colwyn Committee in 1927 stated:—

"We think that any embarkation upon new expenditure of whatever nature should only be made if at the same time conditions are held to permit of the increase of the Sinking Fund to the above dimensions (£100 millions per annum)."

Further, the floating debt has now reached such proportions as to be in itself more than a disturbing factor.

Mr. Ramsay MacDonald asks that Parliament shall regard itself as a Council of State. Is it not possible to have a Council of State that shall be a reality? Let there be a moratorium as regards all contentious legislation for two years, and in that interval let us have a Government composed of statesmen drawn from all parties to concentrate upon international peace and such vigorous administrative action at home as shall set our national house in order, and enable our revenue to recover its waning resiliency. The absence of a majority of any one party in the House of Commons minimizes the difficulties of the formation of a real Council of State, and would smooth its task.

The crisis we are now faced with is, in its industrial and financial character, no less grave than when Mr. Asquith formed a national Government to marshal all our resources for war. The need of the hour is again co-operation.—Yours, etc.,

J. FREEMAN DUNN.

Poynings, Sheldon Avenue, Highgate, N.6.
January 5th, 1930.

CULTURAL PAROCHIALISM

SIR,—In Mr. Woolf's admirable critique of the great twin-brethren Mr. Belloc and Mr. Chesterton, my attention was arrested and held by the following sentence or half-sentence: "A man would be very ignorant or very foolish who denied the great and splendid contribution of Catholicism in its time to European tradition and culture." I am inclined wholeheartedly to endorse this judgment, but I find that if I use it as a criterion, it involves some drastic revaluations of established reputations. Thus, I open the first volume of J. B. Bury's magnificent edition of Gibbon's "Decline and Fall," and on the first page of the introduction I light upon this paragraph:—

"But Gibbon has his place in literature not only as a stylist, who never lays aside his toga when he takes up his pen, but as the expounder of a large and striking idea in a sphere of intense interest to mankind, and as a powerful representative of certain tendencies of his age. The guiding idea or 'moral' of his history is briefly stated in his epigram: 'I have described the triumph of barbarism and religion.' In other words, the historical development of human societies, since the second century after Christ, was a retrogression (according to ordinary views of 'progress'), for which Christianity was mainly to blame."

On the next page, Bury added, "We are thus taken into a region of speculation where every traveller must make his own chart. But to attempt to deny a general truth in Gibbon's point of view is vain: and it is feeble to deprecate his sneers." Neither in Gibbon nor in Bury was there any recognition of any great or splendid contribution of Catholicism to European tradition and culture, and if Mr. Woolf is right, we seem shut up to the strange con-

clusion that both the great historian and his great editor were either very ignorant or very foolish.

Take another example. In the excellent annual which the Rationalist Press now regularly offers us as its contribution to the gaiety of Christmas, the place of honour is given to an article by the Hon. Bertrand Russell, entitled "Has Religion Made Useful Contributions to Civilization?" Here, if anywhere, we would suppose a wise and well-informed writer must refer to the positive contribution of Catholicism to the European tradition. There is not even a casual allusion, and any recognition of any such contribution is expressly excluded by the opening paragraph, which runs as follows:—

"My own view on religion is that of Lucretius. I regard it as a disease born of fear and as a source of untold misery to the human race. I cannot however deny that it has made *some* contributions to civilization. It helped in early days to fix the calendar, and it caused Egyptian priests to chronicle eclipses with such care that in time they became able to predict them. These two services I am prepared to acknowledge, but I do not know of any others."

Perhaps if a contribution to culture can be great and splendid without being in the least useful, Mr. Russell might pass Mr. Woolf's test, but on any ordinary interpretation it looks as if Mr. Russell, too, is either very ignorant or very foolish. Indeed, unless the opening paragraph of his article is to be understood as an example of what Artemus Ward would call a "Jew desperate," it will be hard to acquit Mr. Russell of being guilty on both counts.

These applications of Mr. Woolf's criterion are somewhat disconcerting, because men like Gibbon, J. B. Bury, and Mr. Bertrand Russell are not ordinarily classed with the foolish and ignorant and yet all three are extraordinarily unaware of any valuable contribution of Catholicism to culture. Perhaps we might plead extenuating circumstances in each case. Gibbon, as Bury justly observes, was a powerful representative of certain tendencies of his age, and we all recognize now that a contempt for the Middle Ages, based largely on ignorance, was one of the tendencies of the age which Gibbon so powerfully represented. We could hardly expect even so great an historian to rise above the prejudices of the Enlightenment. Bury's too sweeping endorsement of Gibbon's "moral" is sufficiently explained perhaps when we remember that he hailed from the North of Ireland. Ulster is not very much alive to any contribution of Catholicism to civilization. The blindness of Mr. Bertrand Russell may be due to the fact that he has a bee in his bonnet on the subject of contraceptives. He has persuaded himself that the adoption of the use of contraceptives is the most important immediate contribution to be made to human welfare, and the greatest obstacle to the diffusion of knowledge on this subject is the attitude of the Roman Church. For Mr. Russell, therefore, the Roman Church is the enemy, and when we are at war, we do not admit any good of the enemy. It is true that during the Great War, Mr. Russell felt he ought to publish a courageous pamphlet on "Justice in War-time," but in his present warfare he feels under no obligation to attempt to be just. So where Catholicism is concerned, his feelings are too strong to permit him to offer either a wise or an informed judgment, though normally he is not among the foolish and ignorant.

While it may be possible to trace special influences at work in each case, it is perhaps not without significance that all three agree in accepting what is popularly termed Rationalism. Can it be that Rationalism itself tends to involve men in cultural parochialism? Is there in Rationalism something reactionary allied with ignorance and folly? It almost looks as if it were so. I wish Mr. Woolf, having dealt so faithfully with Catholics like Mr. Chesterton and Mr. Belloc, would deal as faithfully with some of the non-believers whom he, from time to time, commends to us. For cultural parochialism is distressingly evident in some quite brilliant minds who imagine they promote the age of Reason by fostering Rationalist negations.—Yours, etc.,

H. G. WOOD.

Woodbrooke.
January 6th, 1930.

TRANSFER PRICES IN THE COAL INDUSTRY

SIR.—In a further communication on the above subject Mr. C. G. Clark refers to my letter of December 5th and says that he will "be glad to carry on the discussion point by point." He then, however, ignores altogether the principal point of my letter, which was the almost exact correspondence of the "ascertainment prices" of coal sold under market conditions and of that supplied to other departments of composite undertakings. His own index figure for the former, for the first six months of 1929, was 69.8, and my figure for the latter is 69.5.

Instead of meeting this point, he puts forward suggestions which, even from a purely mathematical point of view, are quite inconsistent with the range of variation of coal prices. If, for instance, a variation of 10 per cent. were to be accounted for by an artificial reduction in the price of coal representing 23 per cent. of the total tonnage, that 23 per cent. would have to be sold at a reduction of something over 40 per cent. below the general level of prices.

Mr. Clark insists on taking 1924 as a suitable standard year, and says that I am wrong in protesting that the exports of that year were still affected by the French occupation of the Ruhr. It is quite true that the figures for 1924 were 18 million tons below those of 1923, but they were from 10 to 11 million tons above those of any of the years 1925, 1927, and 1928. However, I will say no more upon this point than that it is not considered good statistical practice to take figures for one year as a basis for such a variable item as prices. And the point here is not the stability of tonnage, but the stability of export prices, which fell from 24s. 6d. in January, 1924, to 21s. 6d. in December. This difference of 3s. compares with a fall in average pithead prices of 1s. 6½d., from 20s. 4½d. to 18s. 10½d.

With regard to the examination of the accountants by Sir William Beveridge during the proceedings of the Samuel Commission, Mr. Clark may, of course, be in a specially privileged position to know the workings of Sir William's mind, but I can only judge from the public records of the Commission with due regard to the context.—Yours, &c.,

PHILIP GEE.

5, New Court, Lincoln's Inn, W.C.2.
January 6th, 1930.

CATHOLICS AND LITERATURE

SIR.—After reading Mr. Leonard Woolf's interesting article on Messrs. Chesterton and Belloc, one cannot but reflect upon the limitations of that world as evidenced by the recent issue of a revised version of the Catholic "Index of Banned Books." No sincere Catholic can say "Securus Orbis Librorum Judicat," nor can Mr. Woolf's interesting prediction that Mr. Belloc will one day attribute "Candide" to the Catholic Church be fulfilled, since "Candide" is one among many books that Mr. Belloc is forbidden to read. One suspects, however, that Mr. Belloc has peeped several times into Voltaire, and also that he has done more than peep into the "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," another banned book. An "apologia" of the Index from the pen of either Mr. Chesterton or Mr. Belloc would make excellent reading; it would probably prove to be a best seller. True, we have an official defence from Cardinal Merry del Val, but his advocacy would convince no one who retains any vestige of individual intelligence.

I suppose it is too much to hope that either "G. K. C." or Mr. Belloc will break a lance in support of the Index. That is a topic on which clever Catholics wisely prefer to maintain silence.—Yours, &c.,

T. D. LOWE.

The Glasgow Literary Club.
January 4th, 1930.

LORD CHIEF JUSTICE JEFFREYS

SIR.—Mr. Woolf's comment on Jeffreys in a recent issue reminds me that John Evelyn was personally acquainted with that "great man," being on dining terms with him, and who, as Evelyn says, "used me with great respect."

Evelyn was a man of calm judgment, and free from Whig bias. Entries in his diary describe Jeffreys as, "reputed to be most ignorant, but most daring," and later, as, "of nature cruel, and a slave to the Court." On another occasion, when Evelyn, with Jeffreys and another judge, were fellow-guests at a wedding, the diarist was shocked at their unseemly behaviour. The two judges danced, and were "exceeding merry," and remained at the party, "till eleven at night in drinking healths, taking tobacco, and talking much beneath the gravity of judges . . ."

I leave it to Mr. Muddiman to explain how he reconciles these comments of a wise and impartial contemporary with his conception of Jeffreys as a "great judge" and a "great man."—Yours, &c.,

C. R.

MR. D. H. LAWRENCE AND LORD BRENTFORD

IT was a happy and indeed a witty thought of the publishers to induce the most remarkable of our novelists and our most notorious Home Secretary to write pamphlets* on the subject of indecency. Needless to say, Mr. Lawrence and Lord Brentford disagree. Yet they have two characteristics in common, and it is well to observe what these are before passing on to their differences.

The first common characteristic is an emotional uncertainty which threatens them whenever they generalize about the public. Most men and women have, to put it bluntly, no opinions at all about indecency, sex, pornography, the censorship, &c. They have habits, but no opinions. The expert cannot realize this. Definite himself, he ascribes opinions where they do not exist, and if he is a reformer as well as an expert he tends to divide the public into friends and foes, and to ask himself which section predominates. Unable to discover, he loses his aloofness, and feels that he is surrounded now by friends, now by foes, now he cries, "He that is not against us is for us," and now, "He that is not with me is against me." Lord Brentford, for instance, complains that there is an enormous demand for improper postcards in England, and then says that if the trade was suppressed not more than a hundred people would object. Both statements cannot be true. And Mr. Lawrence, though he understands his own reactions and so steers a straighter course, is likewise swayed when he thinks of the mob, hates and loves it alternately, regards it as a villain, a dupe, a comrade, rolled into one. This instability is natural. When they think of the general public, both writers echo an emotional uncertainty which was voiced long ago on the shores of the lake of Galilee.

Their second common characteristic is that each of them detests indecency, and desires to suppress it. Lord Brentford's opinion is familiar, but it is Mr. Lawrence, not he, who writes, "I would censor genuine pornography, rigorously." Of course, as soon as we try to define "genuine pornography" the battle opens; still, both disputants feel that there is something in sex which ought to be prohibited. "It would not be very difficult," adds Mr. Lawrence, but he has not yet been Home Secretary. Lord Brentford, who has, did not find it very easy.

What is this accursed and illegal thing?

Lord Brentford dare not tell us, because from his point of view to define filth is to advertise it. He is obliged to hint, or to say that when a thing is wrong it is wrong. We can only find out his meaning indirectly, and, proceed-

* "Pornography and Obscenity." By D. H. Lawrence.
"Do We Need a Censor?" By Viscount Brentford.
(Faber & Faber. 1s. each.)

ing thus, we discover that he considers everything relating to sex evil with one exception : marriage. An administrator rather than a psychologist, he does not ask himself what marriage is. Marriage is marriage. Any instinct which does not lead towards it, or which disturbs it after consummation, is suspect. It was ordained as a remedy against such instincts, and for the production of children. And we must further note that children occupy, in his eyes, a peculiarly sacred position, partly because of the emphasis laid on them by Christianity, partly because they are the marriageable of the future. He always has a child at the back of his mind, who must be shielded from impurity, and many of his antics can be traced to a high and genuine knight-errantry. At the time when the "Well of Loneliness" case was still *sub judice*, he informed the London Diocesan Council of Youth that he was determined to suppress all books which made "one of the least of these little ones offend." It was a curious speech, coming at such a moment and from a Minister of the Crown, but it rose naturally to his lips, because he specializes on the welfare or supposed welfare of the child, and is willing to burn any masterpiece that might deflect adolescence from its authorized course. Marriage, the children, the family—that is his conception of society. Everything outside them or inside them is questionable.

If we grant his premises—that everything in sex except marriage is evil, and that children must always be protected, whatever the cost to adults—then his conclusions follow, and he expresses them here in a clever, good-tempered way. He is not a fanatic. He would not, he assures us, impose his opinions unless they were shared by the electorate. He acquiesces in democracy. And democracy has decided on some sort of censorship, whether it be of actions, speech, drama, cinema, literature, or art, and whether it be exercised before or after the event—though when "the people learn, not merely to disregard but to detest all forms of indecency . . . no censorship will be needed." The people will learn, democracy has already learnt. On this confused and characteristic note the pamphlet closes. It is the work of a competent man of affairs, who has strong moral convictions and does not niggle about with logic, who believes that his actions are right, and genially defends them against the aspersions of critics, when he has nothing more important to do.

To turn from him to Mr. Lawrence is to turn from darkness into light.

Into what sort of light? Many will say that it beats through the bars of hell. But even those who detest him most must admit that they can see what he is talking about, whereas with Lord Brentford they could not see, they could only infer. He can tell us straight out what he finds evil in sex, because from his point of view to define filth is to sterilize it. To him the one evil is "self-enclosure," and under this definition he includes not merely the physical act of masturbation, but any emotional counterpart of it, any turning-inward upon itself of the spirit, any furtiveness and secrecy, any tendency to live in little private circles of excitement, rather than in the passionate outer life of personal interchange. Man has his solitary side, but if he embraces this kind of solitude, he is damned. "To-day, practically everyone is self-conscious, and imprisoned in self-consciousness. It is the joyful result of the dirty little secret." Here (he argues) is the only real indecency, here is the genuine pornography which he would rigorously censor, here is the harvest which men like Lord Brentford have sown.

Some readers will be shocked by his brutality, others deterred by his occasional mysticism, others again will feel that he is only inviting us to exchange one type of super-

vision for another, and that it is safer to be judged by Sir Chartres Biron than to fall into the hands of a writer of genius. But of the importance and novelty of his attack there is no question. He has dealt a blow at reformers who are obsessed by purity and cannot see that their obsession is impure. He arraigns civilization, because it is smoky and grey and degrades passion by pretending to safeguard it, and confuses purity with modesty, and lifts up pious eyes to heaven and cherishes dirt elsewhere. And lest this should sound like vague denunciation, he quotes a couple of poems, with devastating effect. They are famous poems. One of them is, "My love is like a red, red rose." Is this a pure poem? No; "my love is like a red, red rose only when she's not like a pure, pure lily." The second poem is "Du bist wie eine Blume"—a pure poem and also an indecent one; the elderly gentleman is mumbling over the child and praying God to keep her pure, pure for ever, pure for the dreary little circle of his own thoughts. For Burns sends his emotions outwards to mingle with human beings and become passions, Heine shuts his up in the circle of self-enclosure, where they fester. And Heine, not Burns, is the modern man. He is a typical product of repression, and when he tires of mumbling, "So hold und schön und rein," he will go to the smoking-room, and tell, also in low tones, an improper story.

What, then, is our remedy? Free speech? Not altogether. To say, as has been said above, that by defining filth Mr. Lawrence hopes to sterilize it, is not quite to express his attitude. He does not wholly believe in free speech, for the reason that it never leads further than Dr. Marie Stopes. However much we speak out and denounce our repressors, we shall still be imprisoned in the circles of self-consciousness, we shall merely be the grey denouncing the grey. To escape into salvation and colour, something further is needed: freedom of feeling, and how is that to be attained? He does not tell us, except by mystic hints which only the mystic can utilize, and in this direction his pamphlet comes to a standstill. But as a polemic it is remarkable. He has brought a definite accusation against Puritanism, and it will be interesting to see whether Puritanism will reply.

One might sum up the conflict by saying that Lord Brentford wants to suppress everything except marriage, and Mr. Lawrence to suppress nothing except suppression; that the one sounds the trumpet of duty, the other the trumpet of passion, and that in the valley between them lie the inert forces of the general public. If a battle develops, we shall all of us have to get up and take sides; but need a battle develop? There has never been one in France. Is not a more reasonable issue possible? Is not the solution to be found not in the ringing clarion calls of either camp, but in the dull drone of tolerance, tolerance, tolerance? I hope so. Nor is tolerance quite as dull as its worthy followers suggest. Tolerance has its appropriate dangers, just as much as duty or passion. It, too, can lead to disaster and death. It can do harm, like everything else. It can, in the subject under discussion, sometimes injure the young, precisely as Lord Brentford contends. But it does less harm than anything else. It blights isolated individuals, it will never poison a nation. It is on the whole best. It is the principle which causes society the minimum of damage, because it admits that the people who constitute society are different. Unlike Mr. Lawrence, I would tolerate everybody, even Nosey Parker and Peeping Tom. Let them peep and nose until they are sick—always providing that in the course of their investigations they do not invoke the support of the law.

E. M. F.

THE ITALIAN EXHIBITION—II

ENDED last week on Masaccio's tremendous Crucifixion. It is worth while to follow him at once into Gallery III. where, on the stand, we can see his *Desco da Parto*, No. 190, as I have never been able to see it at Berlin. We can see that this precious and unique work is in almost perfect condition, we can follow the strokes of Masaccio's brush as he modelled the lights onto his local colours, and get into intimate touch with his astonishing sense of form. With what a generous ease he expresses those slight distortions of form which every artist who has a strong feeling for the whole movement of a figure is bound to make unconsciously. Look, for instance, at the "pull" of the nurse's head and shoulders as she strains intently over the new-born infant. Masaccio, to a supreme extent, has the power—which Giotto also possessed—to evoke in us by his figures the feeling described by Wordsworth in the *Leech Gatherer* of the body "which moveth all together if it move at all," only this is equally true of the vital rhythm of a figure at rest. Remembering that this was done before 1430, we must be amazed at the extraordinary naturalness of this design, at the perfectly natural way in which the figures fit into their space. It has the texture of actual life, although it is also a marvellous design. No one else in early art saw things so exactly in all the relations of the whole situation. One feels almost that Masaccio had only to shift his focus a little—to shut his eyes and then look again—to see the whole complex of appearances, as Velasquez did. Of course, this is nonsense, because even had he seen it in the literal sense, what it might imply for design could only be arrived at by those innumerable tentatives which occupied the intervening centuries. Only there is the astonishing fact of how true Masaccio's instinctive feeling was for the total complex texture of vision. We can gauge the marvel of this by turning back to Room II., Nos. 129, 130, where Domenico Veneziano, himself an artist *d'avant garde*, some fifteen or twenty years later could not relate his figures to their setting, or indeed to one another—see the tiny figure of the king in the balcony—with anything like the same assurance. How schematic and *a priori* this is by comparison! how little it has ever been "seen" in its entirety! Even Fra Angelico, brilliant and astute as he was, does not ever see a scene in Masaccio's "modern" way; witness the lovely little "Attempted Martyrdom of SS. Cosmo and Damian," No. 83, though who would stop to complain when he tells how futile the attempt was with his inimitable gusto. Alas, he is seen for the most part here in a less admirable vein. Apparently we have to accept, with whatever reluctance, his *Madonna* from Pontassieve, No. 82, which has never been seen before. It is certainly a shock to see Fra Angelico justifying so far the notion of him as the author of pietistic picture postcards. But there it is—all the sticky sentimentality of a modern *bondieuserie*. One never ceases to wonder how little Fra Angelico's devotionalism interfered with his sincerity as an artist. He was, one thinks, almost miraculously preserved. But it could not always be; there were moments when one suspects the desire to accomplish a good work, to paint a *Madonna* for some pious and eager confraternity or convent must have forced his hand and led to his repeating a familiar theme; and when æsthetic conviction failed, sentimentality would fatally step in to fill its place.

Botticelli, one thinks, was less tempted. At least he had a wider range of emotional life to draw upon. But even he becomes "Botticellian," in the bad sense, in the little Poldi Pozzoli *Madonna*, No. 120, with its cheaply seductive colour, its too elegant still life. And what about

the *Derelitta*, No. 117, one of the sensations of the exhibition?—for everyone knows the reproduction, and hardly any of us had seen the original. It steps right out of its century somewhere into the neighbourhood of Delaroche, if such blasphemy may be pardoned. How dangerous these emotions are when an artist has the means to give them expression too ready to his hand, so that they need not sink down and rise again to consciousness miraculously transmuted. And what superficial means Botticelli thought good enough for realizing his idea, how schematic the surface, how wanting in any sensual quality, how desperately economical in its merely tinted colouring as of an architect's elevation.

Fortunately, Botticelli regains all our devotion in Gallery III. I certainly never saw the *Birth of Venus*, No. 142, in Florence so well as here. Never realized what a miraculous colour harmony it is with that silvery grey rose flesh hardly telling upon the evanescent grey blue of the dawn sky. By the by, the fact that the scene is supposed to be at the last moment before dawn becomes day was, I believe, never realized until, when it was brought into the full light of the marvellous clearness of these winter days, two dim blurs of white were seen in the sky, and at first supposed to be due to some damage. But there they undoubtedly are, faint, misty images of stars, just on the verge of disappearance. It adds another touch of poetry to this incredibly poetical picture. Poetical, but how wonderfully saved by Botticelli's imaginative intensity from the reproach which that word so frequently and so justly carries. For it is entirely transmuted into visible values which, whatever their source of inspiration, need no external support.

In the *Calumny*, No. 141, in spite of the wonderful, long rhythmic melody which unrolls across the panel, I find Botticelli less continuously upheld. He was too much obsessed by what Politian kept telling him about Zeuxis and Apelles; too anxious to put all this learning into the bas reliefs of his judge's throne; and this led him on to the restless agitation of all his background—an agitation which nearly conceals from us the beautiful proportions and intervals of the archways which lead onto the chrysoprase sea.

But perhaps his highest flights of imagination are to be found in the panels from Philadelphia, Nos. 188, 191, which belong to his Christian period. It is difficult *à propos* of these pictures, which tell the story of the Magdalen, not to speculate upon the kind of influences which led to their conception. The theme of repentance would be likely to be prominent in the mind of a convert to Savonarola's revivalism, and especially to one so unrestrainedly passionate as Botticelli seems to reveal himself. And to a penitent who had been so devout a worshipper of Venus, what could bring to a head all his conflicting emotional experiences so powerfully as the story of the Magdalen? I suspect a penitential mood underlay the idea of the *Derelitta*, but there it could not find any true formal expression. But when Botticelli thought of the Magdalen's life and penitence, his feelings found an appropriate channel. In any case, I know no other examples at once more pathetically passionate in their psychological overtones or more consummate in their design. As illustration, what could be more evocative of the mood than the way the Magdalen is seen in No. 191! While all the company crowd round the figure of Christ, she hangs back behind a pilaster and dare not approach; and what a feeling for balanced asymmetry in the placing of these figures and their relation to the architecture. No less surprising is the design in No. 191a, where, again, all the interest is concentrated to the right round the figure of the Magdalen as she kneels at Christ's feet, and what a discovery to redress the balance by that brilliant escape into sunlight through the narrow door to the left. Or again, in No. 188b, how the proportions and divisions of the garden wall isolate and enclose the two figures and somehow heighten the tremendous intensity of their conversation. What an artist he was in spite of the dreadful legacy of "Botticellian" sentiment.

ROGER FRY.

THE DRAMA

SOME CHRISTMAS PRODUCTIONS

Drury Lane: "The Sleeping Beauty."
New Scala: "The Babes in the Wood."
Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith: "The Rose and the Ring."
The Rudolf Steiner Hall: Miss J. Sterling Mackinlay's Matinées.
Children's Theatre, Endell Street: "Jack and the Beanstalk."
Victoria Palace: "The Windmill Man."
Strand Theatre: "Treasure Island."

THE question immediately arises about Christmas plays—Who are they for? Are they to aim chiefly at the adults and hope to entertain children incidentally, or *vice versa*? The Drury Lane Christmas pantomime, the most noble of Christmas entertainments, aims at the first solution and, I think, achieves it. It is the easier course, as children, not generally being allowed to go to the theatre, enjoy going more than grown-up people, especially in the evening. Even at the matinées, however, grown-ups seem to predominate, though the children are vocal and happy. The 1930 pantomime is a good pantomime, full of fine scenic effects, masses of pretty girls, including some excellent Tilley girls, a really genial comic in Mr. Jay Laurier, who rapidly ingratiated himself with the children, and a fine old queen in Mr. G. S. Melvin. Also I admired a *ballet* illustrating the economical beauty of machinery. How rapidly aesthetic theories spread nowadays! The Russian Ballet yesterday, the Pantomime today. I enjoyed the Pantomime more than I did as a child, when, to tell the truth, I was pretty thoroughly bored. But the children seemed contented, so I suppose it is for everybody.

"The Babes in the Wood," at the New Scala, is on the same lines as the Drury Lane Pantomime, but not nearly so good. The amount of jokes on the subject of drinks and public houses was excessive. With occasional lapses, this, too, is a grown-ups' entertainment.

"The Rose and the Ring," that marvellous by-product of Victorian genius, ought to be the perfect entertainment for old and young. For both parties equally like the book, though for different reasons. Perhaps I may be sentimental about the work, but I cannot feel quite satisfied with the performance at the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith. I will overlook the irrelevancy of most of the "book," as perhaps inevitable, but the delicate satire seemed to me coarsened. And the moment any coarseness sets in, facetiousness cannot be far behind. The best scene, probably, was the ludicrous one in which Giglio is acclaimed by his brother undergraduates, a scene which cannot possibly be interpreted by the jests of the music-hall. Countess Gruffman, on the other hand—she had all that disagreeable quality of an old maid by Gilbert. We got a long way off from the "home life of our dear queen," which, up to a point the satirist had in view.

"The Rose and the Ring" is probably perfect material for a children's play, because the cast is not bothered about getting into touch with the "child mind," &c., a difficulty which is not always escaped by the organizers of the admirable children's theatre in Endell Street. It is not that their material is not very good—it very often is. But the actors seem to stop being actors, and become professional philanthropists doing their best round a Christmas tree. A child is probably as truly "aesthetic" as any grown-up, and will quickly see through this sort of pretence. Miss Jean Sterling Mackinlay (who is at the Rudolf Steiner Hall again for her matinées, along with soft-toned choir-boys) avoids this pitfall more easily than the Children's Theatre players. She provides a good and original type of entertainment, which even very young children enjoy. Her *ballet* of "Froggy would a-wooing go" was an excellent turn, recalling, to a small degree, the charm of Caldecott.

"The Windmill Man" is such an old favourite that it can be dismissed with a line now. It, too, is a children's entertainment.

But if by "children," we mean "boys especially," "Treasure Island" remains, I think, the best entertain-

ment of the season, though it must be admitted that that sinister atmosphere which Stevenson thought he had achieved, has been largely dissipated. The sultry wickedness of John Silver and his loathsome acquaintances appears comic to sophisticated youth, and the bad language, "Off you go, you lop-sided son of a lobster," is greeted, as bad language should be, with a hearty laugh. But Jim Hawkins is, of course, a gift. He is the perfect super scout, the day-dream of all well-disciplined and well-brought-up and thoroughly bored boys—the idealization of independence and initiative. Get an attractive boy for the part, and there never seems to be any difficulty about that, and the play is bound to be a success. "Treasure Island" is the best entertainment for both old and young; uncle and nephew will both be at their best in the Strand Theatre.

FRANCIS BIRRELL.

PLAYS AND PICTURES

English Folk Dance Society, Albert Hall.

IT was in 1899 that the late Cecil Sharp began collecting, editing, and arranging folk tunes and dances, after his interest had been aroused by watching traditional folk dancing at Headington in Oxfordshire. Incidentally, he founded the English Folk Dance Society, which holds an annual festival and which gave a performance at the Royal Albert Hall last Saturday evening consisting of dances selected from those given at the festival together with some examples of Biscayan dances by traditional dancers from Berriz, Biscay—one of the Basque provinces. These proved of considerable interest for the light they—like the English folk dances—throw on the cultural development of their countries, as well as for themselves, and for their influence on—and parenthood of—native music and dancing of the present day. Examples of dances from many parts of England were given, some of them being performed by the traditional dancers themselves, and some of them deciphered and interpreted by the Society from a collection made in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by John Playford, dancing master. Among the traditional dances a Morris Jig by Mr. William Kimber, one of the Headington dancers whom Cecil Sharp saw in 1899, was of much interest, and a Sword Dance by members of the Society, having its origin in Northumberland, was of much intricacy. Many of the dances were elaborate, and all were performed by the various teams with great enthusiasm and precision.

"Ten Nights in a Bar Room," Gate Theatre Studio.

On the second night of this production, Mr. Godfrey delivered a harangue against the critics of the daily *Press*. They had, it seems, chid him for trying to make funny what was funny in itself; which, said he, was exactly what he had not done. "Ten Nights," he affirmed, was not for one second burlesqued, but played exactly as it was played by the stock companies of a bygone age for whom it was written. That, no doubt, was his intention, but his achievement was another matter. I will—reluctantly, I confess—take his word for it that the actors were not consciously trying to be funny; but he said they were "perfectly sincere." That, to me, was beside the point. The play itself is one of those gloriously moral Victorian melodramas, and lives up in every line to its subtitle "Ruined by Drink." In itself it is, of course, sincere, but its sincerity is of that astonishingly ingenuous brand that cannot possibly be expressed by "sincere" acting. The problem is, how to guy it without seeming to guy it. Act it as it was meant to be acted, says Mr. Godfrey. Certainly; but with a cast of West End actors that is not possible unless each actor deliberately plays the part, not of a character in a play, but of a Victorian stock actor acting a Victorian stock "drama." And this cast of West End actors, with one exception, have apparently not the remotest idea of what a Victorian stock actor was like, or at any rate they cannot reproduce whatever idea they may have. The difficulty, though it has not here been surmounted, is not insurmountable, for the model does still exist here and there in the provinces. Until about two years ago the boards

of Collins's Music Hall in Islington were held by such a company. If only Mr. Godfrey could have reassembled that band, what a terrific performance they would have given! As it is, only Miss Elsa Lanchester gets near the goal. She plays Mary Morgan the Drunkard's Daughter in the authentic Collins's manner, and wipes the floor with everyone else. Her flaxen tresses, her gestures that are always just too late or just too narrow, her appallingly sophisticated innocence, her air of complete detachment from everybody and everything, these things are a joy that easily atones for the elaborate facetiousness of the rest. Only when she is singing her old Cave of Harmony "numbers" does she forget that abominable child actress, and even then, for one member of the audience at least, she conjured up happy memories. Mention, however, must be made of Mr. W. E. C. Jenkins's quite irresistible smile, reminiscent of a now departed music-hall comedian who rejoiced in the name of George Bass.

"The Beggar Prince," Embassy Theatre.

Why, says Miss Cicely Hamilton, author of this delightful play, why on earth should fairy plays be sentimental? Why not use logic as a basis for juvenile drama, common sense as the foundation of fantasy? Your logic and your common sense must, of course, be those of the child mind, but for heaven's sake don't let it be sloppy. And sloppy it is not. The result is an atmosphere comparable in the welter of children's entertainments only to the atmosphere of the Children's Theatre, of Miss Sterling Mackinlay's matinées, and of Miss Mary Casson's matter-of-fact acting: which is the highest praise I can give. The production is not perfect; the music, for instance, is for the most part uninteresting and none too well played, and the small-part players are either lacking in competence or puzzled by the unorthodox spirit of the play. But all things considered, this is by far the best, most sensible, and most up-to-date children's play I have seen for a very long time. Miss Helen Goss's Princess is superbly free from the musical comedy touch, in singing and acting alike, without ever becoming amateurish, and Miss Sybil Arundale's sergeant-majorish Fairy Godmother is even more refreshingly untraditional.

"The Private Secretary," Criterion Theatre.

Whenever I confess to my elders and betters, as I did last week, that I can see nothing funny in "The Private Secretary," they invariably reply, "Ah, but you ought to have seen Penley." I will go so far as to admit that I ought to have seen Penley, but I still adhere to the conviction that just as "Charley's Aunt" is a thundering good farce, "The Private Secretary" is a thundering bad one. The humour is wholly knockabout, and third-rate knockabout at that; there is not an ounce of character in the whole play, and the endless "comic business" is so rusty and stale—almost "Shakespearean"!—that I find it hard to believe—though I do, as I say, believe it—that even Penley could have made it funny. The only person to whom I can conscientiously commend the play is Mr. Raymond Mortimer, and that in the left-handed spirit of his "Defence of Christmas" in a recent NATION article. However, the Christmas holidays are notoriously a close time for dramatic criticism, so I will be content with recording that I was in my annual minority of one, and that the fortunate majority enjoyed themselves as much as ever. But I really must put in a plea for a better production next year. The "Charley's Aunt" company knock spots off this one.

Film, "Evangeline," Piccadilly Theatre.

This is a particularly blatant example of the type of film that, beginning with pretty-pretty love scenes in pretty-pretty settings, continues through a long series of separations, thwartings and agonies to final emaciated death. This example of the type is evidently intended to wring the withers of the most hardy; for tears course down the cheek, the gorge rises, or one gropes for one's hat, according to the habits of one's emotions. If those foolish people who say in their thousands, "I see enough trouble in everyday life without going to see . . ." (whatever it may

be: Shakespeare, Chekhov, Strindberg), would only say it of this film we might be spared repetitions, but it is just to this film that they are likely to flock, in a manner analogous to—if indeed it does not actually amount to—flying from healthy sex to perversion. In fact, here in one afternoon or evening we are given three distinct flavours—the merely tantalizingly sexual, and quite humourless, "comedy" "Beach Babes"; the curtain raiser (on the stage) which soon horse-plays sex off the stage and back to screen in an equally humourless manner for the worst of the three—the sticky thwartedness of "Evangeline." Longfellow was Longfellow: this version of him is an abomination.

The Film Society.

"New Babylon," a Russian film which formed the chief part of the Film Society's programme last Sunday, was somewhat of a disappointment. Directed by G. Kozintsev and L. Trauberg, who are associated with Messrs. Pudovkin and Eisenstein as forming the advanced group of Russian film-directors, it does not bear comparison with the films of Eisenstein and Pudovkin which the Society has already shown. It has many interesting points—some very beautifully composed photography, skilfully used variations of speed, and the intelligent use of different types of face which is characteristic of the Russians—but as a dramatic whole it fails to convince, because of its incoherence and lack of historical clarity. (This may, of course, be due to bad cutting.) The film sets out to tell the story of the Paris Commune of 1870, but from the beginning to end the historical situation is never made plain. First, the Germans, who had already taken the city, are scarcely mentioned at all; secondly, the whole action is confined to a small group of people—both on the side of the "workers" and of the bourgeoisie—who appear continually throughout the film without any attempt being made to relate them to the larger issue, so that one gets the impression of a storm in a teacup. Other films shown were "Les Mains," a study of the movements of hands which would be more interesting if it were shorter; "A Trip to the Moon," an extremely entertaining film made in 1897, performed rather in the manner of a ballet, with artificial scenery; and "Assault and Battery," an amusing burlesque crime-story.

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Things to see and hear in the coming week:—

Saturday, January 11th.—

Orchestral Concert for Children, Central Hall, 11.

Mr. Howard Robertson on "Architecture in Daily Life," 34, Bedford Square, 3.

Sunday, January 12th.—

Mr. J. Hutton Hynd, on "Robert Burns (January 25th, 1759): A Study in Human Nature," Conway Hall, 11.

"The Devil," by Mr. Ben Levy, at the Arts Theatre.

Monday, January 13th.—

Discussion between Mr. A. P. Herbert and Mr. Gerald Barry on "Should the Speed Limit be Abolished?" the Wireless, 9.20.

Miss Madeline Kent, on "The Mind and Art of Robert Browning," City Literary Institute, Goldsmith Street, W.C.2, 5.30.

Mr. Roger Fry's illustrated Lecture on the Italian Art Exhibition, Queen's Hall, 8.

Tuesday, January 14th.—

Miss Carol Morrison, on "Property, Income, and Inheritance," Caxton Hall, 8.

Wednesday, January 15th.—

Mr. J. W. N. Sullivan, on "What is an Atom?" the Wireless, 8.

Mr. Norman Angell, M.P., on the Five-Power Conference, the Wireless, 9.20.

Thursday, January 16th.—

Royal Philharmonic Society's Concert, Queen's Hall, 8.

Friday, January 17th.—

Gerald Cooper, Chamber Concert, Aeolian Hall, 8.30.

OMICRON.

THE WORLD OF BOOKS

THE NATURAL HISTORY OF A POLITICAL ANIMAL

HERE are few subjects more interesting and more disappointing than political ideas, their history in the past, and meditations and speculations on their future. Anyone who likes to study the natural history of the human mind will find an inexhaustible field in the beliefs and feelings which men have had about kings and Governments, aristocrats, Parliaments, trade unions, Soviets, flags, and shibboleths. The field is almost as rich in "specimens" as the religious. If only one can shed one's prejudices, it gives one as much pleasure to discover what a man like Mr. Belloc contrives to believe about the universe as to discover a specimen of *Orchis laxiflora* which in England only grows or grew on ballast heaps at Hartlepool, or to observe the curious habits, on a certain evening when the moon is full in October or November, of the two ends of the Palolo worm. But one can get almost as much pleasure out of political science, the history of political ideas, and the study of the habits of man as a political animal. The things which Mr. Belloc thinks that he knows about the universe, biological and metaphysical miracles, life before and after death, original sin, and the efficacy of prayer—to name a few of the simpler human problems in which he has attained complete certitude—are only a little more remarkable than the things which Burke thought he knew about the political rights of kings and queens or the nature of revolutions and liberty, which Godwin thought he knew about human nature and polities, which Coleridge thought he knew about democracy, or which a Communist thinks he knows about the dictatorship of the proletariat.

* * *

The study of political ideas is, however, more disappointing than that of religious ideas for several reasons. It is much more difficult to shed one's political than one's religious prejudices. The question of life after death must always have something sufficiently academic about it to allow one, with an effort, to regard it with a certain degree of impartiality and impersonality. Questions like that of the Virgin Birth, Transubstantiation, and even the doctrine of Original Sin can be discussed by some people now without heat and with a certain amount of detachment. It is much more difficult to be detached and cool about the last ten years and the next ten years, about the economic policy of Mr. Churchill, the future of the Liberal Party, or the principles of the Labour Party. The detachment, therefore, necessary for a study of, say, the political ideas of Burke or Godwin is absent, and the scientific observer or historian lapses into the political partisan. It is irritating to find that what pretends to be political science has turned into political propaganda. But there is another disease to which books about the history or science of politics are peculiarly liable. It is extremely difficult to know what the exact connection is between political ideas and political actions, whether historically the principles believed in or professed have been the causes of political events or only *ex post facto* explanations and excuses, or the rationalization of desires. The number of pitfalls into which writers on these subjects can, therefore, fall is amazing. They may assume, for instance, that the principles of democracy announced in the *Déclaration des Droits de l'Homme et du Citoyen* were the cause of the Terror or that the principles of democracy produced the Italian Parliamentary system of the years 1900 to 1918, or that Burke's political "prin-

ciples" produced his defence of American and attack upon French revolutionaries. Or again, where a writer is dealing, not with the past, but with the present and the future, he may and often does confuse what might be or what ought to be with what is, and one does not know whether he means that democracy or Fascism or Communism are, in practice, so and so, or whether merely that in his opinion they ought to be.

* * *

These reflections have been induced by reading three books. In "Democracy, its Defects and Advantages" (Allen & Unwin, 8s. 6d.), Mr. Delisle Burns has written a clever and valuable defence of democracy. Democracy has so many critics nowadays that it is quite refreshing to find an intelligent defence of it. Mr. Burns is a valiant defender, though sometimes the note of apology can be heard in his voice. His book is partly an inquiry into the capacities of the common man to understand political problems and intelligently to control policy and partly an argument to prove that "political democracy is a system for the transformation of authority into service as the binding force of social life." In the process he says many interesting and salutary things about political ideas, but as the book goes on, a certain haziness spreads over it owing to the fact that what ought to be is not always distinguished from what is. To take almost a random instance, when Mr. Burns says :—

"Laws are not commands. They are agreements between equals as to (1) what acts each shall perform, or (2) what acts shall be performed by their servants for the whole community,"

he is saying that laws are what he thinks they ought to be in an educated, just, and tolerant democracy.

* * *

The two other books are historical : "Studies in the English Social and Political Thinkers of the Nineteenth Century," by R. H. Murray (Heffer, 2 vols., 12s. 6d.), and "Edmund Burke and the Revolt against the Eighteenth Century," by Alfred Cobban (Allen & Unwin, 8s. 6d.). Dr. Murray begins with Malthus and ends with contemporary Socialism. His book is full of learning and information, and anyone who reads it ought to end with a profound knowledge of the political beliefs of the last century. But even in reading "ought" is not the same as "is," and when I had finished the book, I found that I had increased that chronic muzziness which seems to infect the human brain. The fault is at least in part Dr. Murray's. He does not distinguish between political thought which is relevant and political thought which is irrelevant to political action. He does not stick to and finish with one point before he goes on to another. He forgets the object of a chapter and of the whole book in his interest in the subject of a paragraph. Mr. Cobban devotes a book to what, in Mr. Murray's, gets a chapter or so. His book unfortunately is not very good. It is more or less a defence of the "conservatism" of Burke, Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey. Mr. Cobban can make something of a case for Burke, but there are some dogs so lame that no one can possibly help them over any stile, and Coleridge as a political thinker is one of them. In the end Mr. Cobban's arguments and conclusions are almost lamer than the poor dog.

LEONARD WOOLF.

REVIEWS

THE GIANT'S ROBE

Lafayette. By BRAND WHITLOCK. 2 vols. (Appleton. 42s.)

THE late American Ambassador to Belgium found himself faced by the necessity, during the war, of making a speech over the tomb of Lafayette in the Jardin de Picpus. His enthusiasm for his theme did not end with the occasion that had called it into being. On the contrary, it grew and grew. Mr. Whitlock read more and more books on the subject. He buried himself in the period. His notes expanded and expanded and expanded, till he had compiled two large, square volumes of four hundred and fifty pages each, devoted to the "Hero of Two Continents."

No one would wish to be unsympathetic before the evidence of so much voluntary immolation. But it is doubtful whether really good books can be brought into being by the processes of Mr. Whitlock. For he started with a partiality so great that it carried him through blindly to the end. After nine hundred pages he can still look at his hero without a smile or a shrug, and treat the whole world in terms of Lafayette. Unfortunately, his subject cannot rise to the heights necessitated by such a treatment. In fact the author is often driven into frank absurdity by the continual necessity of heightening the theme. Thus when Lafayette in 1818 became deputy for the Sarthe, we read that this *fait divers* "shook all Europe," a phrase typical of Mr. Whitlock's efforts to expand his frog into a bull.

The whole thing is terribly overdone. The American episode is far the best. Mr. Whitlock's hero is at his most attractive, and the author knows too much about America to be dazzled. Lafayette was a high-spirited, generous-minded lad, whom vanity and restlessness sent filibustering in America. Washington saw his value, flattered him, petted him, was perhaps even fond of him, and Lafayette responded with a doglike adoration, such as is not often paid by the small man to the great one. By the age of twenty-four, he was the most famous man in the world, and his career was over, though he lived on another half-century to be a nuisance. But even by 1780 a few thoughtful people began wondering whether "Gilles César" had really done his country a service by dragging her into a war and finally ruining her finances in order to pull chestnuts out of the fire for Washington, who had no intention of not making a separate peace as soon as it suited him. The last word was with the music-halls:—

"Dans les champs de l'Amérique
Qu'un guerrier vole au combats.
Qu'il se mêle des débats
De l'empire britannique,
Eh ! qu'est qu'ça m'fait à moi
J'ai l'humeur très pacifique
Eh ! qu'est qu'ça m'fait à moi
Quand je chante et quand je bois ?"

The famous white horse is beginning to fret our nerves even before the American war is over.

But, nothing daunted, Mr. Whitlock next turns Lafayette into the hero of the Revolution, continually caracolling, pirouetting, and shouting *Vive la liberté!* This effort needs continual care, and Mr. Whitlock makes such a number of unjustifiable assumptions, that he is a very dangerous guide across the swamps of the Revolution. The Duke of Orleans becomes the most powerful influence in politics, leading on a string not only Danton, which is highly problematic and obscure, but on occasion even Marat, which is absurd. October 4th, that black day in the career of Lafayette, is treated very strangely, and Marie Antoinette is made to appear a jibbering idiot for not throwing herself into the arms of a man who was always screaming about republics, and whose instability and vanity she had every reason to fear.

Then comes the fiasco of Lafayette's *coup d'état* and "treason." The poor *émigrés* are soundly trounced for not immediately taking Lafayette to their bosom. In what sort of world does Mr. Whitlock live? Naturally Lafayette gets tremendous credit for resisting the Empire. But, after all, what could Napoleon give him? No doubt he would have resisted temptation, but no real temptation could be offered. There was a slump in white horses. Next we see him in

1815, still shouting the old windy claptrap about Washington and 1789; and still at it in 1830, clamouring for more European wars and preposterous expeditions to Italy and Poland, till even the long-suffering Louis-Philippe, whose immense talent Mr. Whitlock never dimly suspects, was compelled to get rid of him.

Mr. Whitlock is naturally full of his hero's consistency. Consistency is a good thing. And an idea is none the worse for being unpopular. But simply to repeat like a parrot in 1830 what one had learnt in 1775 shows not so much consistency as intellectual sterility. Lafayette was the most tiresome sort of political Peter Pan. By the age of twenty he was the slave to his reputation and spent fifty years trying to live up to it, with the result that

" his title
Hung loose upon him like a giant's robe
Upon a dwarfish thief."

Still he was always buoyed up by his consummate vanity; and as he was a thoroughly good fellow, we may hope he has been spending a merry Christmas reading Mr. Whitlock's biography, in Heaven.

FRANCIS BIRRELL.

"BAD" LATIN

Medieval Latin Lyrics. By HELEN WADDELL. (Constable.)

THE Public Schools are always being attacked for teaching dead languages. The real trouble is that they teach them so badly. Like most victims of a Public School education, I spent nine years trying to learn Latin and Greek, and without the help of a crib I can read neither. This disability becomes increasingly irritating as one realizes the variety and richness of literature in these languages. Schoolmasters carefully concentrate on the authors least likely to interest the young—dreary chroniclers like Livy, quibbling barristers like Lysias. There is an extraordinary view that only early writers in each language are "good." When English becomes a dead language, the Congolese schoolmasters will no doubt decree that everything written after 1800 (or perhaps 1500) is late, degenerate, and deplorable. Actually Sophocles and Virgil resemble Racine and Milton in appealing only to the most sophisticated taste. They are not the bait, but the reward, of erudition. I can still remember, however, the unexpected excitement of an anthology of Silver Poets, which one term, by some miracle, we were given to construe.

"Te circum Alcyones pennis planxere volantes,
Fleveruntque tuos miserando carmine casus,
Et tibi contextas umbram fecere per alas."

This poetry may be baroque, but it is picturesque. Better still as an introduction to Latin would be Miss Waddell's anthology:—

"The winds are soft with birdsong: all night long
Darkling the nightingale her descant told."

Miss Waddell's translation is romantic, but it is faithful. Schoolboys enjoy Keats. Would they not also enjoy Sedilius? Here is his original:—

"Nunc variae volucres permulcent æthera cantu
temperat et per nox nunc philomela melos."

"Abominable Latin!" That is to say, the grammar is as different from Ovid's as Tennyson's is from Chaucer's. Is it more important to understand the accusative than it is to become interested in literature? There is no need to go as far as Hello, who said that Tacitus and Juvenal were but men stammering the language which St. Jerome spoke like a god. But if a schoolboy were started on the medieval poets, he might come to read Latin fluently. And then, and only then, he could properly appreciate the pets of the Augustan Age.

Miss Waddell's book on "The Wandering Scholars" was enchanting. Her new anthology consists of a hundred Latin poems, with introduction, notes, and verse translations. It begins with the "Copa Surisca" which just may be by Virgil; it ends with a rapturous love lyric from the Arundel Manuscript which dates from the thirteenth century. Apart from "O quanta qualia," it contains none of the more famous religious poems. But these have already been collected, and most of Miss Waddell's selections will

fill the ordinary reader with delighted surprise. They are a new planet, a magnificent unknown literature in a more or less familiar tongue. For such a book quotation is the only convincing form of review, but an embarrassment of riches makes the choice of passages exceedingly difficult.

Already in Petronius one sees paganism dying of its own materialism or lack of imagination, and leaving the field open to Christianity.

"Fœda est in coitu et brevis voluptas
et tædet Veneris statim peractæ."

And the poem ends like Donne's "Ecstasy":—

"Hic non deficit incipitque semper."

Ausonius is a romantic poet, conservative, and therefore still a pagan, but with his beloved friend Paulinus of Nola we have not only Christianity but monasticism, mitigated, however, by a love of natural beauty. Paulinus died in 431, and the next hundred years make a tract, barren save for Boethius, which separates the last outposts of Roman literature from the first camp-fires of mediæval poetry.

"Regis regum rectissimi
prope est dies domini
dies iræ et vindictæ
tenebrarum et nebulae."

This new voice, which uses rhymes to reverberate its warnings, is that of St. Columba, who was born in 521 in Donegal. "Vexilla regis prodeunt" belongs to the same period. (Saints Ambrose and Hilary were using rhyme two hundred years earlier.) Its author Fortunatus was no ascetic, and he usually wrote in elegiac couplets. But he, too, belongs to a civilization already pregnant with madonnas and stained glass and deeds of chivalry, and perceives the classical heroes as figures in a tapestry. He is a charming poet, and this extract shows Miss Waddell's powers as a translator:—

"Time that is fallen is flying, we are fooled by the passing hours....
Likeness is none between us, but we go to the selfsame end.
The foot that hath crossed that threshold shall no man withdraw again.
What help in the arms of the fighters? Hector and vengeful Achilles
Fallen, Ajax is fallen, whose shield was the wall of Greece.
Beauty, beauty passeth, Aster the fairest is fallen,
Low Hippolytus lieth, Adonis liveth no more.
And where are the songs of the singers?"

In the eighth century with Alcuin, England makes a magnificent entrance into polite literature. His "Lament for the Cuckoo," his "Dialogue between Winter and Spring," his fourteen-line poem on a lost nightingale, are the beautiful beginnings of the stream that was to run with Milton in so full a flood, to glide so smoothly in Collins and Gray, to make, in Keats, so melodious a waterfall, and at last in Arnold to lose itself meandering. He wrote for himself an immortal epitaph, and his friend Fredugis mourned him with an equally beautiful lament. Here Miss Waddell is again at her happiest:—

"Gay buds are stricken with the sudden cold.
A sadder wind vexes the quiet sea,
And golden youth that once would course the stag
Is stooped above his stick, a tired old man.
O flying world!"

The ninth century is sumptuous with verse. There is Angilbert's dirge which anticipates the concision in simile of Dante:—

"Karoli de parte vero, Hludovici pariter
albent campi vestimentis mortuorum lineis,
velut solent in autumno albescere avibus."

There is Hrabanus Maurus, who opens a poem to his friend Grimold:—

"Vive, meæ vires lassarumque anchora rerum."

There is Walafrid Strabo, who wrote, also to Grimold, a poem including the lines:—

"So might you sit in the small garden close
In the green darkness of the apple trees
Just where the peach tree casts its broken shade,
And they would gather you the shining fruit
With the soft down upon it; all your boys,
Your little laughing boys, your happy school,
And bring huge apples clasped in their two hands."

And there is Sedulius Scottus. These Carlovingian poets have nothing barbarous save their names.

The tenth century sees the emergence of the vernacular. Miss Waddell includes an Aubade with a refrain which may be either Provençal or North Italian,

"L'alba part umet mar altra sol
poy pasa bigil mira clar tenebras."

"Dawn over the dark sea brings on the sun;
She leans across the hilltop: see the light!"

But Latin is still the natural language for a poet, and this is the epoch of the great religious Sequences. "There were two places," Miss Waddell tells us, "in Europe in the eleventh century where Latin lyric metres were written with ease and pleasure: in Salerno and Liège." Gembloux was a monastery near Liège, and Sigibert of Gembloux wrote poems of an astonishing and pre-Raphaelite beauty. One stanza of his is made up of virgins' pretty names, another, on the Martyrdom of the Theban Legion, begins:—

"I tried to make a garland for the saints....
No lily for me, violet or rose,
Lilies for purity, roses for passion denied,
Nor violets wan, to show with what pure fire
The bride for the bridegroom burns.
I know not how to gild my marigolds,
Proud poppies and narcissus not for me,
Nor flowers written with the names of kings.
All that this blockhead zeal of mine could find
Was privet blossom...."

Though one line is omitted, this translation is exceedingly close to the original.

Next come twenty-seven poems from the thirteenth-century manuscript of Benedictbeuern, which was found in Munich a hundred years ago. These anonymous poems, written and sung for the most part, no doubt, by wandering scholars, are finest secular fruits of a great religious age. It was the age not only of the Chartres sculpture and glass, but of the supreme Christian poets, Adam de St. Victor and St. Bernard, followed by Innocent III. and St. Bonaventure. Mr. Belloc has painted it in his own image, at once hearty and devout; Dr. Coulton has made it squalid and oppressive and puritanical, for he is equally shocked by the severity of the Rules and the laxity of the observance. The Benedictbeuern Manuscript takes us into a far gentler climate, where poets draw from each seasonal change an argument for love. One poem is a satire on the Vatican, another is a spell to keep away fauns, nymphs, penates, and other demons. But most of them are entirely pagan in mythology as well as in spirit. In the background, however, is an asceticism which adds intensity to their passionate appeals. The Church is obsessed, just as these poets are, by the power of women. "Mulier est confusio hominis, bestia insanabilis, fetens rosa, tristis paradisus, dulce venenum, poena delectabilis, dulcor amarus." And St. Anselm tries to persuade himself into disgust:—

"Viscera si pateant occulta et cætera carnis
Carnes quas sordes contegat alba cutis."

Many of the songs are gay and literally flowery, but others are cynical or tormented. Altogether they are curiously like English poetry of the seventeenth century, even in the suddenness of their attack:—

"Time's shut up and Spring
Hath broken prison...."

"Volo virum vivere viriliter
diligam, si diligar equaliter
sic amandum censeo, non aliter...."

"Sic mea fata canendo solor
ut nece proxima facit olor...."

"Dira vi amoris teror,
et venereo axe vehor,
igne ferventi suffocatus.
deme, pia, cruciatus."

But from this book one could quote indefinitely. Miss Waddell is an admirable translator. That is to say, that her method is not to make a literal version and then pinch it into the material shape of an English poem, but rather to produce an English equivalent, which follows the natural movement of our language, and which, read apart from the original, infects the reader with a similar emotion. Sometimes a phrase or a cadence obtrudes too obvious a reminiscence of Keats, for instance, or on one occasion of Browning, but usually she brings great tact to her choice of

metre and diction. But I have quoted sufficiently, I hope, to show that her book is indispensable to all lovers of poetry.

RAYMOND MORTIMER.

A PHILOSOPHICAL SOLDIER

The Generalship of Ulysses S. Grant. By COLONEL J. F. C. FULLER. (Murray. 21s.)

THIS is not an easy book to appraise fairly. It is a big book, and, though not a good one, an important book. Colonel Fuller is well known as a brilliant exponent of the art of war, and a dogmatic exponent of a philosophy of war. His object in this study is threefold: first, to present a new and accurate estimate of Grant's abilities as a leader; secondly, to illustrate from Grant's military career, his own theories of war; thirdly, to demonstrate the causes and uses of war, and the only means of avoiding it. Colonel Fuller has something to say under each of these heads which is worth hearing; but his literary technique is not quite equal to this simultaneous advance on three fronts. His arrangement—slabs of philosophical disquisition sandwiched between longer slabs of narrative and technical criticism—is not good, and his style can be both flat and turgid. His cocksureness is such as we usually associate with shallower thinkers than Colonel Fuller. He is fond of phrases like "hocus-pocus" (applied to the Kellogg Pact). He tells us that "popular opinion on any serious subject is nearly always wrong," and proceeds to demonstrate that professional opinion is nearly always wrong too. Indeed, he sometimes seems to imply that no one but Colonel J. F. C. Fuller has ever thought clearly on questions of war, or peace.

All this is rather depressing, but our business is to get behind it and see what Colonel Fuller really has to teach us. On the narrower question of Grant's generalship, he makes out a very strong case. His analysis of Grant's strategy is masterly, and his defence of the final campaigns in Virginia against the charge of being mere brutal "bludgeon-work" is temperate, closely reasoned, and convincing. He seems rather to under-rate Lee, but must be left to fight out that issue with Sir Frederick Maurice and Captain Liddell Hart. (Incidentally, he offers a heavy bribe to the present reviewer by doing tardy justice to Beauregard.)

As regards the broader military issues, Colonel Fuller is always stimulating and suggestive on the strategical and tactical influence of new conditions and new weapons. His book will strengthen the growing conviction that the length, and cost, of the Great War might have been reduced, had Colonel Henderson succeeded in diverting military attention from the campaigns of 1870-71 to those of 1861-65.

There remains the most important, although the shortest section of the book. Here it is a little difficult to keep one's head and one's temper. Colonel Fuller's analysis, both of war and of peace, is full of doubtful assumptions, doubtful history, and doubtful philosophy. Everything, to him, is so simple. He assumes that the moral case against war rests solely on the number of lives lost. He believes, with a child-like faith, that "scientific management" will infallibly ensure "contentedness in work." Yet, when he gets down to his main thesis, it is a thesis worth propounding. Shortly, his case is this. Wars arise only from evils inherent in the state of peace which preceded them, and can be justified if they cure those evils. War can be prevented, and peace justified, only by curing those evils without war. The chief political evil in the world to-day is the conception of States as independent, competitive, economic units, which finds expression in the imposition of barriers on international trade, by tariffs and other restrictions, which are politically immoral, because they imply a national right to control an international activity. Sooner or later, this conception of national rights is bound to lead to friction and war. The only ultimate security for peace is general recognition of the economic interdependence of the civilized world, and constructive international co-operation to develop the resources of the world, for the general service of the international community.

That may not be the whole truth, but there is enough truth in it to cover a multitude of sins from the eyes of Free Traders and Great Illusionists.

C. ERNEST FAYLE.

WORMS AND MEEKNESS

Fables. By T. F. POWYS. (Chatto & Windus. 25s.)

Few of these fables at all deserve their name. Inanimate objects are made to speak, and a moral is occasionally deducible; but on the whole the book is almost as like Mr. Powys's earlier books as the earlier books are like each other.

Rape and religion have long been the principal ingredients, and admirers looking for the former will not be entirely disappointed; but it is losing ground. Girls, indeed, are never, any more than formerly, mentioned without a leer, and they are mentioned oftener than is at all necessary to the progress of the fable. Still, what would once have been the substance of the book has now become an ornament. The ravished virgin is receding, and her place being taken by the skull.

Of course, there have always been hints of this. Death has always been Mr. Powys's formula for perfect happiness. But it used to be death in the abstract, death spiritualized. Again the emphasis has shifted. What now attracts him is the churchyard element; the idea, no longer of eternal rest, but of a lower life, wormy and animated, going on, if not for ever, at least for so long that its end need not be contemplated. Thus in the second fable, "Mr. Pim and the Holy Crumb," the hero requests God to leave him in the grave at the last day; he expects to enjoy himself there, and has no hankering after heaven. God, however, expresses unwillingness to lose his company; and Mr. Pim solves this difficulty by advising the Almighty to "come and be a rotted bone" by his side. It is advice, one feels, Mr. Powys's God would do well to take. He is a poor creature, hurried by the author from pillar to post, and the butt of the company in general. His usefulness above ground is worse than doubtful. The unexacting chatty life of the churchyard would suit him admirably.

There is a kind of inverted Blakeism in many of the fables; precisely the emphasis on worms and meekness which some people find so nauseating. In each case the



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lower forms of life are formidably prolific ; but while in Blake the worm is spiritualized, in Mr. Powys's tales man is exultingly reduced to the level of a creeping thing, and indeed almost merged in primeval mud. Thus, for example, there is no love in Mr. Powys's books, only sex, and an immense deal of that, treated with much smacking of the lips as an entirely unreflecting and mechanical activity. The ideal of meekness is similarly travestied. Mr. Powys's saintly character is nothing but the customary village idiot, shorn of his evil tendencies, but most repulsive in his simplicity. Another feature of the book is its gloating over a kind of raw cruelty ; animals beaten to death, their legs cut off, their eyes plucked out, and so on.

Mr. Powys's style, like his spirits, is flagging. The Dorset dialect, which he was so skilful in rendering both imbecile and evil, is here used seldom, and the archaic formalism of his English, so insinuating once, stiffens too often into "poetic prose." It should be said, finally, that the morals in the book are all either trite or unintelligible, and the tales, when they exist, dull.

It is a relief to turn from this dreary and sinister text to Mr. Gilbert Spencer's innocent commentary. In his drawings the setting and quaint machinery of the fables are reproduced with attractive simplicity, and not a whiff of their atmosphere appears to have reached his nostrils. One would have liked more of them.

CRETAN PLAYS

Three Cretan Plays. Translated from the Greek by F. H. MARSHALL. (Oxford University Press. 21s.)

THE knowledge, new to most people, that there was a flourishing drama in Crete during the lifetime of El Greco, not only throws light on the obscure history of the Greek islands, but raises hopes of a Renaissance dramatist free from the influence of Seneca. The Erophile of Hortätzis is enough to dash these hopes: in it the Senecan tyrant has coalesced with the Turk and found a fitting habitation "in the country of Egypt" at a period when tourneys are accompanied by appeals to Hellenic gods. The tyrant is more overweening than ever, the ghost more bloodthirsty ; the old nurse and the confidant listen to the lovers' repeated protestations ; the messenger revels in the details of torture, and the last scene shows two whole corpses and some pieces. All that is Greek in the play are frequent echoes of the Attic dramatists, as in the ode,

"Love, who oft amid the greatest
And the fairest wits art found,"

and the imagery which has returned to its native country and so taken on new life.

The "Sacrifice of Abraham," probably adapted from an Italian version of the traditional play, localizes setting and characters as well as imagery. Sarah is the Cretan mother, dressing her child in his holiday clothes and giving him pears to eat, as he sets out to the sacrifice. Her heart beats, "Just as before the slayer's hand some fowl doth throb in fear"; but it was Sophocles that made her send Isaac out "as though to marriage-feast in Hades," and framed Syban's cry of joy: "My master and the lad—in this bitter fight to-day victory in ful have won."

The pastoral comedy, "Gyparis," is worth reading for its own sake. In spite of apostrophe and affectation the shepherds are not far from Theocritus ; the conditions in which the two writers worked must have been similar, a cultured town life in a pastoral community. Beneath the changes that the lovers ring on sky and earth and sea a local comedy is played out among their hard-bitten elders.

Professor Marshall has retained as far as possible the metres of the original. This involved translating the greater part of the plays into couplets of fourteen-syllabled lines, a measure still more jolting than the Greek fifteen-syllabled line. The vocabulary of verse translation, inversion and obscurity make plays that are not easy reading even more difficult ; but in the "Gyparis" and in many parts of the earlier plays the translation rises above these defects. Mr. Mavrogordato's introduction is both informative and illuminating ; all that could be desired is more of the criticism that now must be gathered from casual comments.

GREAT RUSSIAN STORIES

Great Russian Short Stories. Selected by STEPHEN GRAHAM. (Benn. 8s. 6d.)

A GREAT story-teller like Gogol could refine and elaborate village folk-lore without losing any of its authentic flavour. And in many of these stories there is the rough and tumble humour of peasant life, its crude and unembarrassed treatment of sex, its matter of fact familiarity with an unseen world where the distribution of spiritual favours is as arbitrary as the weather on earth. It is largely a matter of luck whether one finishes up at the right or the wrong end of that perpetual tavern which is eternity. There God, a gruff but kindly old uncle, is usually on speaking terms with the Devil, but the sinner, alive or dead, must prove a match for the two of them. In Korolenko's admirable story "Makar's Dream," the peasant hero succeeds in winning mercy by explaining to God just how difficult things are for a poor man, especially when his wife beats him and they put bad tobacco juice in his vodka. In Afanasiev's "Death and the Soldier," the trickster hero (a familiar figure in mythologies from the Winnebago Indians to Punch and Judy shows), outwits both Death and the Devil and posts himself as a sentry at the gates of heaven by arrangement with its august but quite approachable host. In Gogol's "Christmas Eve," the Devil himself (after the pattern of Miracle plays), is a trickster, but his antics are foiled by the Herculean, pious, and love-lorn blacksmith. This is immemorial stuff, to which Gogol has given a subtle and charming twist. (If the poor Devil could only succeed in capturing the blacksmith—"how he would tease all the long-tailed breed in hell !")

Tolstoy used the same stage properties with a different intention. His short stories of peasant life were written with a moral purpose and a consciousness of sin. The broad farce of the inn became an allegory. The ideal presented is a peculiarly sterile type of holiness. It is odd to find the author of "War and Peace" a bore.

Peasant life, love, and religion are the main thread in these stories until the revolutionary epoch. From Gorki onwards a newspaper glare outshines the village lanterns. "Creatures that once were men" is good propaganda. Story-telling for its own sake is gone ; town theories and self-conscious psychology are introduced to explain the new Russia. In the "Unexpected Meeting"—a powerful story of a rather commonplace kind—everything is justified by youth's passionate faith in the Revolution. "Without Cherry Blossom" is a protest against the revolutionary contempt for sentiment which banishes beauty even from love-making. "Bound Over" is the story of a young Socialist striving against the domination of the authorities, his parents, and his own upbringing. "Diphtheria" is a hospital story, very moving in a modern way. It might have been written in any country. The gap between these stories whose object is to "face facts," to stand no sentimental nonsense, to be deluded by no idealistic hopes, to find perhaps some practical faith in a world of horror—and the old zestful art of the story-teller is most forcibly illustrated in Kuprin's "The Song and the Dance." Three students are stranded in a village: "We could not manage to get into the tempo of life there. We were really out of it. This life had creamed and mantled for years without number. In spite of our own pleasant manners and apparent ease we were, all the same, people from another planet."

None of the revolutionary stories is first rate ; they cannot be compared to "The Night of Christmas Eve," "Makar's Dream," Gogol's "Cloak," or Leskov's "Sentry," which are all based on peasant cosmology or the peasant view of officialdom. A few of the very best stories do not belong to either category. Such are Turgenev's "Song of Love Triumphant" (a tale of magic), his "Dream" (a splendid ghost story), Dostoevsky's "A Gentle Spirit," and Garshin's "Four Days." The "Archives of the Countess D—" is translated for the first time. It is the freshest of satires, civilized, tolerant, and really amusing.

A LOCAL HISTORIAN

The History of Hitchin. Vol. II. By REGINALD L. HINE. (Allen & Unwin. 16s.)

THE good opinion which Mr. Hine's first volume required of us is even heightened by his second. He is to be congratulated on the achievement of one of the best possible local histories. We hope that Hitchin is duly grateful to one who has presented the history of the place and the people so happily, and, we imagine, in spite of very frequent dilemma and disappointment, and at the cost of incessant labour. Mr. Hine is not one to be driven from his object. In a period somewhat unfriendly to the works of antiquaries in their own parishes, he produces this excellent and voluminous book; he does more—he revives the old "List of Subscribers."

Were "The History of Hitchin" merely a local book, we might perhaps leave it at this point; but its range is such as to merit a doubling and trebling of the number of subscribers. It is a book of English character, manners, toil, trouble, and recreation in distant and near periods. It opens its windows on persons of importance to the story of the nation, such as Bunyan, on whom Mr. Hine succeeds in adding a detail or two even to the omniscience of Dr. John Brown. (But would Bunyan's "manuscripts have made any ordinary editor despair?" Mr. Hine knows them better than we do; but we did not find those we saw in the "Church Book" worse reading than those of — and —.) In Hitchin, Mr. Hine waves his pen—and the spirit of George Chapman rises, finishing his "Iliad"; Eugene Aram teaches school; the original Uncle Toby stands forth. A faint music in the wind floats from "an Aeolian Harp" "by Robert Bloomfield," in the house of Mr. W. S. Upchurch. And Mr. Hine is able to talk of other ghosts. At Minsden Chapel—it "now belongs to me," says our author—a cowled spectre walks. If you do not believe Mr. Hine (he is bound to be prejudiced), look at the photograph of the apparition which he reproduces.

Throughout his book, Mr. Hine has had the help, and the reader has the refreshment and benefit, of one departed

townsman in particular. This was Samuel Lucas, a brewer, and an artist of great alertness and variety. There is generally someone of the kind in a market town, delighting in its humanity, its experiences, its architecture, and methodically recording them; but not often will a man be found with the talent of Samuel Lucas. In this second volume the frontispiece of the Market-Place in 1845 will immediately support our grateful though brief estimate. The sun shone on Hitchin in those days of water-colour.

Mr. Hine has discussed, in the volume, Religion, Sports, and Crime. With regard to the first of these not necessarily consecutive interests, we met with one especially welcome illustration—"Back Street Sunday School, 1803." It is a wonderful little scene. Here, a close company of boys; there, apart, an equally neat assembly of girls; ushers watching with stiff dignity; the whole breathing the simple air of times when the mysteries were kept in order—and the young.

REVIEWS AND MAGAZINES

THE "Contemporary Review" opens with a rather highly coloured article on Clemenceau, by Sisley Huddleston: "That is what Clemenceau was—a man. Nobody can be more. It takes genius to be a man; and few of us, alas! have genius." Probably this is the easiest way to write about Clemenceau. The same paper has "Prospects of the Five-Power Naval Conference," by Admiral Drury-Lowe, "Empire Free Trade," by C. A. McCurdy, and George Glasgow on "The Calamity of the Chinese Generals." There is also an article in the "Fortnightly" on the "Prospects in China," by Robert Machray. The "Nineteenth Century" has "An Educational Survey," four papers by Harold Hodge, H. C. Dent, Stephen Foot, and Basil Yeaxlee, respectively. Alexander Part writes in the same paper on "Licensing Reform," and Sir John Marriott discusses "Dominion Status." Sir Daniel Hall, Chairman of the Commission on Agriculture in Kenya, writes on "The Native Question in Kenya," and although he finds it difficult to speak with patience of "the incurable romantics (in England) who want to see the noble savage preserved from the contagion of civilization," and although the facts of the land question in Kenya seem as difficult to come by as the truth about Russia, he does give some interesting information about the natives.

Lord Dunsany has a rather charming paper called "The Policeman's Prophecy" in the "Fortnightly." "Going by a cross-roads at that pace," said the policeman to my taxi-driver, "and when I held my hand up! You'll kill yourself and everybody else," the rest is a conception of what it would be like if the taxi-driver really did kill himself and everybody else, and London fell back into the possession of the animals and the plants.

We have five quarterlies and one annual this month. The "Heaton Review" has, Mr. Hugh Walpole says in his foreword, "for its end, aim, and object the life of a particular locality . . . Bradford . . . clings to its own character as sturdily as the secret fastnesses of Eskdale. It is that character of mingled strength and beauty, of misty streets and cloud-enshadowed moor, of clanging tram and ringing bell and open sky that this review must prefer." It is a large and handsome publication, and offers a mixed fare of poems, articles, and pictures.

The "Countryman" has a poem called the "Charabangers," by Sylvia Townsend Warner, and "The Kind of Protection the Farmer Must Have," by E. F. Wise, and a great many other interesting things; it is impossible even for a reviewer not to read the "Countryman" right through, and the only improvement that one could suggest would be that the contents list be placed in the front instead of at the end of the volume. There is a short description in this number of a bad harvest in Inverness-shire, which in a quite unconscious way, in its brevity and bitterness, comes near to being a work of art.

"Science Progress" can only be respectfully pointed to by a layman, but an article on popular science is always included as an encouragement, and this time it deals with "Science and Cosmetics" (by H. Stanley Redgrove), and is of absorbing interest. It is comfortable to know that "those who deride women for using mauve or pale green face-powder for evening use, merely betray their ignorance of the laws of optics."

The "Yale Review" has "President Hoover in Inter-

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THE

LIBERAL MAGAZINE

Edited by HAROLD STOREY

JANUARY NUMBER

The Government and Parliament

**Coal Mines Bill:
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national Relations," by Mark Sullivan, and "The Working of the Mandates," by William Ernest Hocking.

The "Slavonic Review," published by the School of Slavonic and East European Studies in London University, is an excellent paper. This time we have two letters from Tolstoy, one on "The Non-Resistance to Evil," and one addressed to the Slavonic Congress of 1910 in Sofia. There is an article on "The Manchurian Dispute," by Boris Bakhtmetev, and one on "Land Reform in Poland," by Zygmunt Ludkiewicz. Paul Muratov writes on "The Traditionalism of Early Russian Art," and there are selections from "Avvakum's Book of Discourses," by Henry Lanz.

"The Criterion" contains a translation of the German short story—"The Centurion," by Ernst Wiechert—which won the prize awarded by the five reviews: "The Criterion," the "Europäische Revue" of Berlin, the "Nouvelle Revue française" of Paris, the "Revista de Occidente" of Madrid, and the "Nuova Antologia" of Milan. The conditions for the English short story—for which the prize is to be awarded next—will shortly be announced. Ezra Pound writes on Horace, and T. O. Beachcroft writes on Traherne, and there is a fine attack by J. M. Robertson on "Shakespearean Idolatry" and the idolators.

"Nash's Magazine" has "Meditation on a German Grave," by Richard Aldington, a complete story, and the continuation of "The Autocracy of Mr. Parham," by H. G. Wells, and "Revolt at Roger's," a Forsyte interlude, by John Galsworthy. And "Good Housekeeping" has "The Empty Cradle," by Patrick MacGill, and "Ishbel Mac Donald," by Jennie Lee, M.P.

AUCTION BRIDGE

BY CALIBAN.

TAKING-OUT A NO-TRUMPER (I)

THE take-out of a No-Trump declaration into a major suit is, I suppose, the most controversial question in Auction.

At the Club, the other night, the cards were dealt as follows:—

| | | |
|------------|-------------|-------------|
| ♦ J 5 3 2 | ♦ 10 7 4 | ♦ A 6 |
| ♥ A 10 | ♥ J 8 6 3 2 | ♥ Q 9 7 5 |
| ♦ K 8 6 3 | ♦ 5 4 2 | ♦ Q J |
| ♦ Q 8 4 | ♦ K 9 | ♦ J 7 6 3 2 |
| | Y | |
| | A B | |
| | Z | |
| ♦ K Q 9 8 | | |
| ♥ K 4 | | |
| ♦ A 10 9 7 | | |
| ♦ A 10 5 | | |

The score was Love-all in the rubber game. Z (Gonzalo), the dealer, called One No-Trump. I was sitting in A's seat, and passed. Y (Stephano) called Two Hearts; this closed the bidding. Ferdinand, my partner, led the Act of Spades from his Ace doubleton, and in the result the contract was defeated by one trick. We made one Spade, one Spade ruff, three trumps, and a Diamond.

"Unlucky, partner," said Stephano, as he entered up the score. "The Ace of Hearts and the Knave of Spades were both on the wrong side."

"Very unlucky," agreed Gonzalo; "the more so, as I should just have made my No-Trump. With the lead of the small Diamond from Caliban we make—in all probability—two Diamonds, three Clubs, and two Spades. We can let your precious Heart suit go."

"But surely you approve of my take-out?" answered Stephano. "I always rescue a No-Trump on five of a major suit. You can go back again to No-Trumps if you feel inclined to."

"Yes," said I; "but if Gonzalo had gone back to No-Trumps he'd have been one down."

"Well," Stephano appealed to the table, "I've always understood that with five Hearts or Spades a No-Trump *must* be taken out. The authorities are very strong on the point. As a matter of fact"—he produced his pocket-book—"I looked them up, some of them, the other day, when the very same point arose. They confirmed most strongly my original belief."

"Read out what they say," suggested Ferdinand. Stephano cleared his throat.

"First, Mr. R. F. Foster, in his 'Bridge for Beginners.' We have this rule as one from which there should be no exceptions for the beginner: If your partner bids No-Trump, and the second hand passes, if you have five or more Hearts or Spades bid that suit, no matter whether the suit is weak or strong, and no matter what you have in the other suits."

"That's unequivocal enough," said Ferdinand. Stephano resumed:—

"Next, Taylor and Hervey. They're not *quite* so definite. For the average player the Take-out is advisable in the great majority of cases, provided that the original declarer . . . knows what to expect from his partner, and uses his own judgment as to whether to support his partner's suit or to re-bid No-Trumps."

"Thirdly, there's 'Buccaneer.' Don't know who he is, but he's quite emphatic on the point. He prints it in italics: 'With one weak spot, the Third Hand should always declare a long MAJOR suit, that is, a suit of five or more, even without high honours.'"

"I'm sure we're grateful for all this research," murmured Gonzalo. "Any more?"

"One more—Mr. Macbeth, in 'Auction Bridge Simplified.' He goes farther even than the others. After careful consideration of the pros and cons, I have arrived at the conclusion that the best policy for Dealer's partner, when the Dealer has bid One No-Trump . . . is to take out a One No-Trump bid on any five-card suit, be it major or minor."

"Well," said Ferdinand, "there seems to be no getting away from a stack of authorities like that."

"All the same," said Gonzalo, "I'm not convinced. My own experience suggests to me that these weak take-outs aren't good. What do you think, Caliban?"

"I agree. I'm grateful to Stephano for looking at the text-books; the views of their writers naturally carry weight. But we needn't regard a decision as final merely because it appears in print. Some writers merely copy one another; and others, though they may, for all I know, be good players, are ill-equipped for the analysis of the game and for the exposition of its logical principles."

"That's very cheap," said Stephano. "If we aren't to believe these writers, how are we to get at the truth?"

"Why," said I, "by experiment—if we can't agree as to the force of the arguments put forward. Let's take these two hands, of Gonzalo's and Stephano's, and, leaving them as they are, deal the other twenty-six in a number of different ways. Ten deals, I should think, ought to do. Then let's play each hand through, first in No-Trumps, and then in Hearts, and compare the results that we get."

"All right," said Ferdinand with enthusiasm; "let's."

(The results of our experiment will be discussed in my article next week.)

NEW GRAMOPHONE RECORDS

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OWING to an accident, we have not been able to notice a particularly fine recording issued over a month ago. This is the Double Concerto of Brahms for violin and 'cello, Op. 102 (Four 12-in. records. DB1311-4. 8s. 6d. each). The violin is played by Thibaud and the 'cello by Casals, while the orchestra is Casals's Barcelona Orchestra, conducted by Cortot. The conjunction of these luminaries produces a magnificent performance, full of the fire that the piece requires. The tone of the recording is exceptionally beautiful, and all lovers of Brahms should possess these records.

There is some pleasant music in the Russian Easter Festival Overture of Rimsky-Korsakov, Op. 36, and less of the tawdriness which so often irritates one in the work of this composer (Two 12-in. records. D1676-7. 6s. each). It is perfectly played by the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra.

"Ozean, du Ungeheuer," from Weber's "Oberon," is a stock piece with sopranos, and has been frequently recorded. Maria Nemeth is, we believe, a soprano new to the gramophone. Her voice records well, and she sings a by no means easy piece finely (D1717. 6s. 6d.). Another vocal record, fairly good—the songs chosen are not of the most interesting—is by Sigrid Onegin, a contralto well known to gramophonists. She sings "O don fatale," from Verdi's "Don Carlos," and "O mio Fernando," from Donizetti's "La Favorita" (12-in. record. DB1292. 8s. 6d.).

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FINANCIAL SECTION

THE WEEK IN THE CITY
LOSSES IN 1929—HOME RAILWAY POSITION—INDIA LOANS

THE distinctly more cheerful feeling manifest in the stock markets gives us the courage, which we lacked last week, to work out the losses which the average speculator would have suffered last year. If he had invested £3,000 at the end of last January by putting £500 in each of the following six groups of industrial shares—chemicals, gas and electricity, newspaper, shipping, silk, and miscellaneous, selecting the representative shares included in the *INVESTORS' CHRONICLE* security price index—he would have lost by the end of December approximately £1,000 of his capital. If, on the other hand, he had listened to the sober advice of some cautious stockbroker and had put £1,000 into Courtaulds, £1,000 into Imperial Chemical Industries, and £1,000 into insurance shares, he would, by December 31st, have lost £474 on Courtaulds, £392 on Imperial Chemical, and £190 on insurance shares, a total of £1,056. Even if he had invested £3,000 in British funds, Colonial stocks, and home corporation stocks he would have suffered a depreciation of 6 per cent. by the end of the year. This is not remarkable. Security prices fell steadily from February, 1929, when Bank rate was raised from 4½ per cent. to 5½ per cent. From April, 1927, to February, 1929, Bank rate had remained at 4½ per cent., and during that period the trend of security prices—with few exceptions—had been upward, culminating in the stock market boom of 1928. Now the stock markets have been thoroughly deflated—the finishing blows having been given by a 6½ per cent. Bank rate, the Hatry crash, and the Wall Street slump—and, *deo volente*, we are entering upon a new cycle of advancing prices.

* * *

The immediate cause of the more cheerful disposition in markets is in part the expectation of an early fall in Bank rate to 4½ per cent.—the discount rate for three months' bills being already about 4 per cent.—and in part the agreement reported to have been reached among members of the Stock Exchange and the banks with regard to the Hatry settlement. The fifty-two weeks' returns of the home railway traffics are also encouraging. Have the home railways at last come to the end of their traffic losses? The goods receipts for the four groups were £3,458,000, or 3.5 per cent. up, chiefly on account of the large increase in the coal, coke, and other mineral traffic. More passengers were carried than at any previous period, but the lower average for fares caused passenger receipts to decline to £2,168,000, or 2.7 per cent. London and North Eastern and Great Western benefited most by the greater volume of coal and coke carried. Export coal accounted for 25 per cent. and 45 per cent. respectively of the North Eastern and Great Western coal receipts, against 10 per cent. in the case of London Midland and Scottish. Bad trade and the cotton strike in Lancashire hit the London Midland and Scottish, whose total receipts were down £616,000, as the following table will show:—

Increase or Decrease of 1929 Receipts compared with 1928 (£ 000's omitted).

| | L.M.S. | L.N.E. | G.W. | Southern |
|--------------------|---------|---------|-------|----------|
| Goods Receipts ... | + 499 | + 1,919 | + 928 | + 112 |
| Passenger do. ... | - 1,115 | - 564 | - 293 | - 196 |
| All do. ... | - 616 | + 1,355 | + 635 | - 84 |

These receipts do not include interest or receipts from docks, steamships, and auxiliary undertakings. Moreover, they are gross receipts. The home railway management still refuse to publish net receipts. Why should no stockholders know how many economies are being made in operating expenditures?

* * *

If we assume that the auxiliary receipts of the home railways were much the same in 1929 as in 1928, and if we may guess that the rates of savings in operating expenditures effected in 1929 as compared with 1928 were 4 per cent. for L.M. & S., 3.15 per cent. for L. & N.E., 2 per

cent. for G.W., and 2 per cent. for Southern, we arrive at the following interesting results:—

| | L.M. & S. | L.N.E. | G.W. | S. |
|--------------------------|-----------|--------------------|--------|--------|
| | | (£ 000's omitted.) | | |
| 1928 Net Revenue ... | £16,271 | £11,278 | £7,057 | £6,394 |
| 1929 Net Revenue est. | 18,359 | 14,232 | 8,619 | 6,733 |
| Earned on Ord. Stk. est. | 5.80% | 7.08%* | 8.76% | 7.55%* |
| Earned on Def. Stk. | — | 2.44% | — | 3.17% |

* On preferred ordinary.

If these calculations prove to be correct, it means that the London Midland and Scottish could pay, say, 4½ per cent. on its ordinary stock against 3½ per cent. in 1928, London and North Eastern 5 per cent. on its preferred ordinary stock against 4 per cent., Great Western, which should have earned its standard revenue, 7 per cent. on its ordinary stock against 5 per cent., and Southern 2½ per cent. on its deferred stock against 2 per cent. It is very doubtful whether London and North Eastern will pay 5 per cent. on its preferred ordinary stocks, seeing that it is anxious to conserve its cash resources, but if these rates of dividend were paid the following yields would be obtained:—

| | L.M. & S. | L.N.E. | G.W. | S. |
|--------------------------|-----------|--------|------|------|
| Price of Stock ... | 56½ | 38½ | 91½ | 30½ |
| Potential dividend yield | 8.4% | 12.9% | 7.6% | 8.1% |

To buy the ordinary stocks of home railways is, however, to run certain risks. For example, will the 2½ per cent. cut in wages and salaries, which is largely responsible for the big economies made, be continued next May when the agreement expires? To what extent will the Coal Bill increase the price of coal to the home railways? These are vital questions; but, even so, it is difficult to see how the security of the home railway prior charges can be greatly affected. The yields on some of the preference stocks might encourage trustees to change their attitude with regard to the home railways:—

| | Times dividend covered | Yield |
|----------------------------|------------------------|-------|
| Price. (estimated) | £ s. d. | |
| L.M. & S. 4% pref. ... | 73 | 1.43 |
| L. & N.E. 4% 1st pref. ... | 68 | 1.69 |
| L. & N.E. 4% 2nd pref. ... | 63 | 1.27 |
| Great Western 5% pref. ... | 93½ | 1.76 |
| Southern 5% pref. ... | 90½ | 1.55 |

* * *

The market in Indian stocks has more or less got over the fright it received from the Lahore Congress. To upset the "safety-first" investor it is only necessary to mention the dreadful word "repudiation." Even to think it is enough, as Mr. Tom Shaw found out the other day. The Lahore Congress boldly declared that a free India would repudiate debts which had not been fairly incurred. This declaration of independence served a good purpose. It taught the "gilt-edged" market not to regard the security of Indian loans as the equal of that of British Government loans. Why India stocks have always been shown in the official list of the Stock Exchange under the heading "British funds" and in the section containing the guaranteed loans, is a mystery. India loans are raised on the security of Indian revenues. The powers of the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief are an assurance that law and order will be kept and the revenues will be collected. But if a "passive resistance" movement gained ground in India, if the Indian masses refused to pay taxes, it is conceivable that the collection of revenues would break down, and that the interest on India loans would not be met. This contingency is unlikely, because the Indian extremists are not united, and because there is an increasing body of wealthy and influential Indians who are anxious to carry on their business life, but if anything of the sort happened, the Imperial Government would not legally be obliged to compensate India stockholders. India loans, like those of the self-governing Dominions, are not guaranteed by the Imperial Government.

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